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John Bull

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by Lawrence Earl

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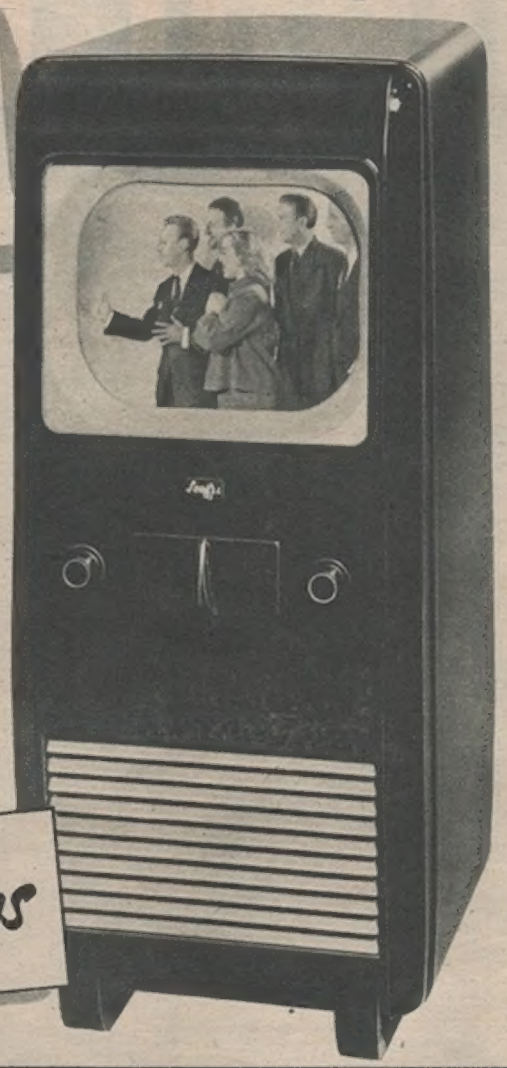

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EDITORIAL

Crisis that puts up the cost of your cinema seat

THE INCREASE IN entertainment tax on cinema seats comes at a time when the British film world is already deep in one of its recurring money crises. Some sections of the industry are therefore making a good deal of noise about it.

Behind the clashing claims made by various film interests, these are the facts in brief:

The Chancellor is raising the taxes on cinema admission prices to bring in another £10,000,000 a year. This means, for example, that the cinema seat which for years cost one and ninepence, and now costs one and tenpence, will in future cost two shillings.

Cinema owners—or exhibitors as the trade calls them—naturally hate this tax and are fighting it hard.

But their arguments overlook two points; no industry can expect to escape its share of the burden when Britain is paying for rearmament, and the tax, anyway, will be paid by the public and not by the exhibitors.

However, they fear that it may keep some of their customers away and so reduce their takings. And they have asked for permission to put an extra penny on their prices *before* taxation, to cover their own higher costs.

MEANWHILE, the state of the British film studios remains deplorable. Many have been closed. Technicians are out of work. Output of films is as low as it has ever been, and looks like going lower. At the moment there are only six full-scale British films being made around London.

The reasons? Past extravagance in production; withdrawal of backing by financiers who have been bitten before; and the insufficient share of box office revenue which filters back through exhibitors' and distributors' hands to the producer.

All this despite the fact that five out of six of the outstanding film successes of 1950 were British!

To help keep the studios going the Government did two things. First, it started the Film Finance Corporation and gave it £6,000,000 to lend to producers. The Corporation has parted with about £5,000,000. Much of this has been lost, but many of the best recent British films would never have been made without it.

Secondly, the Treasury produced a plan, named after its chief civil servant, Sir Wilfred Eady, whereby seat prices and the sliding scale of tax could be slightly altered. The public would pay the industry £3,000,000 more, half of the money going to the exhibitors, the other half to the producers.

The change of prices and tax cost the Treasury £300,000—proving that there is a real desire in Whitehall to encourage British films. The producers have never been helped so much before, and there is at present £750,000 left in the kitty.

The Chancellor has now gone further. He promises to leave the film people a quarter of the extra £10,000,000 which the higher entertainment tax will bring in—as long as most of it goes back to the hard-hit producers.

This is sound sense, and the cinema-going public will approve. Both the Eady plan and Mr. Gaitskell's new variant on it are fine.

FOR nobody really denies that if British producers need a more generous deal it should come first from the British box office. And nobody with inside knowledge of the economics of the film business will dispute the handicaps under which the British producer must work.

American film companies can make films costing £500,000 and more, get their money back from a vast home market and sell their product here for a profit at cut rates. British companies must produce a *winner*—not just an average picture—for around £150,000 if they are even to cover their costs from their home market. They cannot ever rely on profits from overseas. Not, at least, as long as they are denied a fair showing in America. "Record runs" of British films in New York have been at little cinemas, and the majority of our pictures still cannot get a profitable general exhibition throughout the U.S.

So Mr. Gaitskell has produced what, in the present circumstances, is perhaps the only possible cure for the British film studios' chronic distress.

It is now up to the film people themselves to stop their internal wrangling and get into step.

It is vital that the exhibitors should drop their traditional hostility to British producers, out of whose risks they have prospered greatly. They must remember that they have had the best of it for years, because they have been able to exploit American films as well as British ones; that they are not the productive end of the industry; and that unless men of imagination and skill come forward to take risks in film-making, the bricks and mortar of the cinemas will be valueless.

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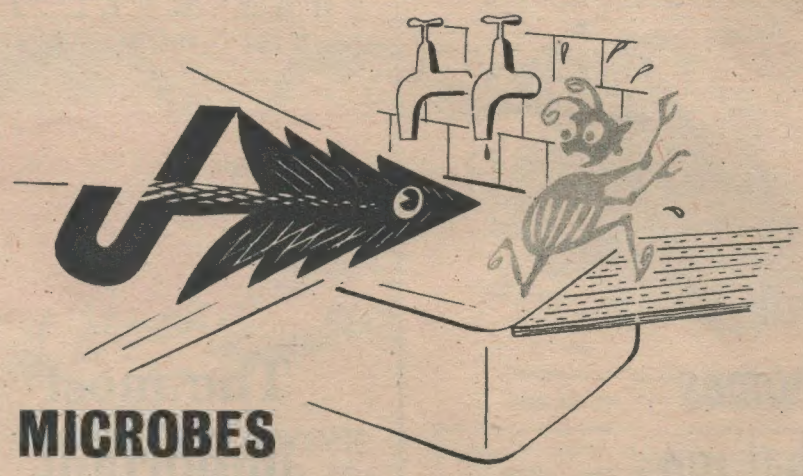

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June 2, 1951 VOL. 89 No. 2344 PHONE: TEMPLE BAR 2468 GRAMS: HEROICALLY, WESTCENT, LONDON

FREE SPEECH

The most important things in life

MY YOUNG NEPHEW and his friends have just been discussing the most important things in life. My nephew's version was this: "Money, good looks and personality." With these, he said, a person could get anywhere he wanted.
I disagreed and gave my version: "Courage (including moral courage), good manners (meaning kindness and consideration for others), and good health." Immediately I was howled down by the young folk for being old-fashioned. I am, I must add, just in my forties.—MRS. MARGARETTA ATKINSON, 10 Fern Avenue, Whitburn Colliery, Durham.

Rescue By Submarine

IN HIS JOHN BULL SERIES, *I Was A Soldier-Spy*, Lt.-Col. Basil Davidson tells how a British submarine went to Kotor, Jugoslavia, to evacuate Sir Ronald Ian Campbell, our Ambassador, and his staff. I was a member of the crew. After our arrival a group of Italian officers came out and demanded that our skipper, Lt.-Com. Browne, come ashore. Skipper refused, but agreed to let one of his officers, Lt. Lambert, go ashore, provided that an Italian officer was left aboard as hostage. Skipper himself did *not* go ashore. He was hit no fewer than nine times during the bombing that followed, but refused treatment until he had taken H.M.S. *Regent* safely into the Adriatic—together with the Italian hostage. Lt. Lambert was left behind but later escaped to England.—E. SHAW, 97 Grange Lane, Ashby, Scunthorpe, Lincs.

Mother Shares The Honours

ON MY DAUGHTER'S BIRTHDAY, my niece arrived with a present for her—and flowers for me. I was surprised and thrilled by this idea. After all, who is more deserving of congratulation at this time than the mother?—MRS. F. J. SHORT, 53 Ellenbrook Road, Boothstown, Manchester.

The Four-day "Medical"

MY TWO BROTHERS were recently called to medical inspection for the Services. Harry, the younger, had to appear on four separate days: first for the usual "medical"; secondly, for an eye test by a specialist; thirdly, for ear-syringeing; finally, for medical grading. Each trip, thirty miles each way, meant four full days' pay with a fares allowance. Robert, my elder brother, had to appear twice for Z Reserve medical inspection: first, for the usual "medical"; secondly for ear-syringeing. Each journey, twenty miles each way, involved two full days' pay and fares. I hope that these are not typical cases, for, otherwise, what must it cost the country in loss of production and money? — JAMES J. IRVINE, 18 The Fairway, Darlington.

A Scout On Bob-a-Job

IT IS HIGH TIME a Boy Scout gave his views on the so-called "cadging" which some readers apparently connect with the Bob-a-Job scheme. At first, I, too, disliked the idea, but now I'm glad I did go out, for I got some worthwhile jobs and found it all quite enjoyable. No one is obliged to give a Scout a job, and I and many others would rather not receive money for doing nothing. If, on the other hand, anyone is mean enough to underpay for a job properly done, he is cheating, not the Scout, but a good and noble movement.—DONALD A. HILLARY, 40a Traquair Park West, Edinburgh.

. . . My Brownie (aged ten and a half) and my Cub (eight and a half) both obtained record Bob-a-Job totals for this district. Valerie, the Brownie, who did sixty-three jobs, got £2 11s. 6d., and Raymond, the Cub, got £2 4s. 6d. The two of them went from door to door, ready to tackle anything. They thoroughly enjoyed themselves, and the people enjoyed their company. One of the shillings Valerie earned included a silver threepenny bit; as she hadn't seen one before, she wondered whether she had been paid enough money. — MRS. A. F. BRETT, Ferry Road, Old Felixstowe, Suffolk.

Parlez-vouz American?

WHILE IN AMERICA RECENTLY, I was amazed at the ignorance about Britain and the British that I found in the small towns. Frequently, on my being introduced to people, they remarked: "Oh, but you speak American." Once, indeed, a woman said to me: "Parlez-vous American?"—MRS. JOYCE CLARKE, 70 Brecks Lane, East Herringthorpe, Rotherham, Yorks.

A. N. Other

SPECTATORS would benefit if Test and county cricketers were numbered like footballers. Thousands of us at important matches do not know the players except by name, and often cannot tell who is bowling or who has made a catch. I do not suggest players should be plastered with a large number on their backs. An armlet, bearing the same number as the score card, would serve.—C. MCDONALD, 32 Avenue Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire.

Build-up For A Speaker

THE REFERENCE in David Clayton's article, "He's Got The Famous Talkers On Tap" (JOHN BULL, May 12), to the shortcomings of chairmen at meetings reminds me of the day when I was asked to deputize at short notice for S. P. B. Mais, the author. "Ladies and gentlemen," said the chairman, introducing me, "I am very sorry to tell you that Mr. S. P. B. Mais is ill and will not be here tonight. However, in his place we've got Captain McDermott, and the reason we've got Captain McDermott is that we couldn't get anyone better." There was a moment's silence; then a roar of laughter. At another meeting, a lantern lecture, I misjudged the width of the platform and, stepping back to demonstrate something on the screen with my pointer, found myself falling into space. I grabbed desperately at a metal stanchion holding up a plush curtain; this slowly bent over and gently deposited me on the floor. But that audience was considerate. No one even tittered.—F. MCDERMOTT, Clifftop, Upton, Bude, Cornwall.

The Three Friends

MY PETS go one better than the cat-and-dog friendships described by readers. Just look at the snapshot of my trio! The rabbit has the freedom of the lawn and is always accompanied by his companions, the spaniel, aged

eleven, and the cat, aged three.—MISS ELIZABETH C. DAY, 7 Kewstoke Road, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Somerset.

Film From A Serial

OFTEN I FIND MYSELF "casting" film stars as characters in JOHN BULL serials, and am delighted to see that David Farrar (my choice) plays the lead in *Night Without Stars* by Winston Graham, serialized in JOHN BULL two years ago. My choice for the part of Alix, played in the film by Nadia Gray, was Michèle Morgan.—J. DAND, Herts.

Besides "Night Without Stars," these JOHN BULL *serials have been filmed: "Traitor's Island" by Martha Albrand (film title "After Midnight"), starring Alan Ladd and Wanda Hendrix, and "Green Grow The Rushes" (not yet screened), starring Roger Livesey and Honor Blackman.*

Kind To Hitch-hikers

BY THE MUCH-CRITICIZED method of hitch-hiking two friends and I (all students) covered the 300 miles from Penrith to Slough in twelve hours—due to the kindness of drivers: one woman motorist made a detour of twenty miles to help us.—D. J. ABBOTT, 20 Shackleton Road, Slough, Bucks.

A Handle To It

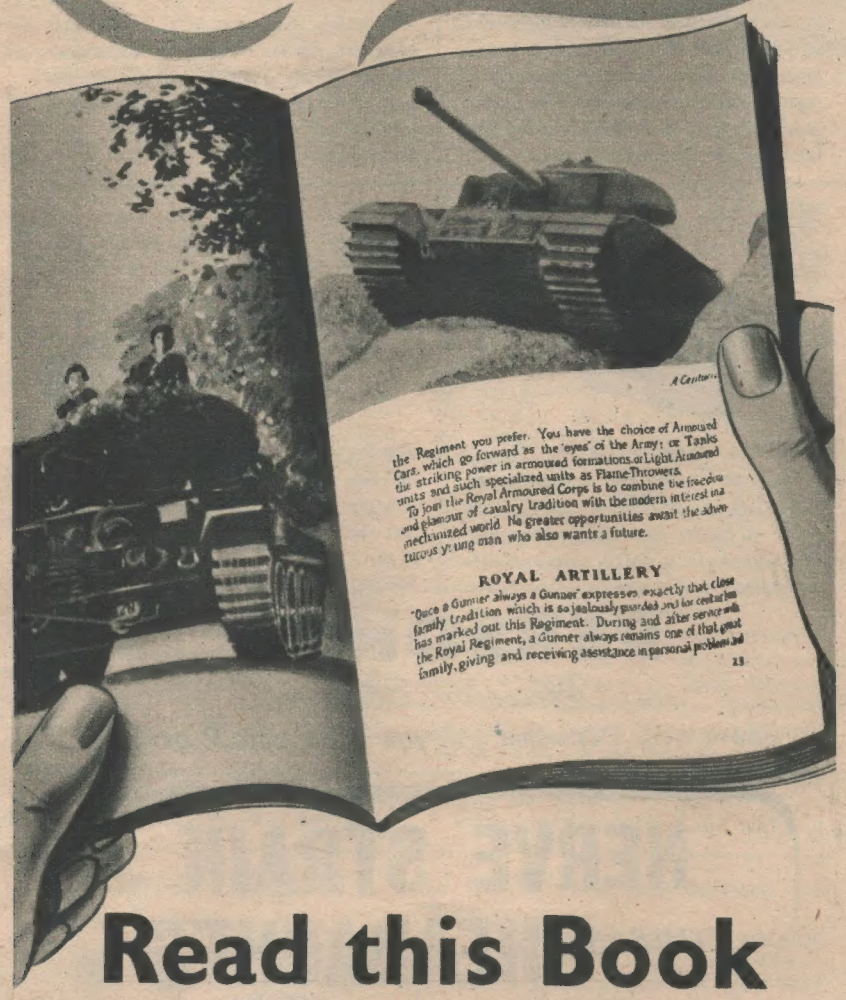
SOME EMPLOYERS STILL address those who work for them as "Brown" or "Smith," without the prefix "Mr." If a man is treated as just another cog in the machine, how can he be expected to show initiative?—E. G. HALL, 147 Birchfield Road, Northampton.

John Bull welcomes readers' views, experiences and ideas for publication. A guinea is paid for every letter used. Mark the envelope "Free Speech" and make sure your full name and address are in the letter.

THIS WEEK'S COVER

RONALD LAMPITT'S cover is of a wedding at the church near his home at Sidcup, Kent. When he was married there, the walls were mellow and covered with ivy, and outside the giant elms were alive with the noise of rooks. That was before the church was destroyed in the war. It has now been rebuilt. For old time's sake, Lampitt's painting shows something of the old and the new.

What's it like in the REGULAR ARMY?


the Regiment you prefer. You have the choice of Armoured Cars, which go forward as the 'eyes' of the Army; or Tanks the striking power in armoured formations or Light Armoured units and such specialized units as Flame-Throwers.
To join the Royal Armoured Corps is to combine the freedom and glamour of cavalry tradition with the modern interest in a mechanized world. No greater opportunities await the adventurous young man who also wants a future.
ROYAL ARTILLERY
"Once a Gunner always a Gunner" expresses exactly that close family tradition which is so jealously guarded and for centuries has marked out this Regiment. During and after service with the Royal Regiment, a Gunner always remains one of that great family, giving and receiving assistance in personal problems and
23

Read this Book and KNOW

How much do you know about life in the Regular Army of 1951? Not very many people know all they might! Do *you* know for what length of service with the colours a man enlists? Or whether he has any choice? Or what a soldier is paid on entry? What a corporal gets—or a sergeant? What trades are taught in the Regular Army—how many of them are recognised by the Trade Unions? Honestly—have you any clear idea of the sort of deal a soldier gets today?

Send for this book. It's illustrated, readable, interesting—and it gives you the facts. If you're young, & you want a career that starts now instead of after your National Service . . . If you're older than that, and you want a man's job with men for company . . . If you've got a son who may any day ask you 'What's it like in the Army, Dad? (not, mark you, what it *was* like!)—read 'The Regular Army'. It's yours for the asking, free and without obligation. Any recruiting office will hand you a copy—or the coupon below will bring it by return of post. Send for this book *today!*

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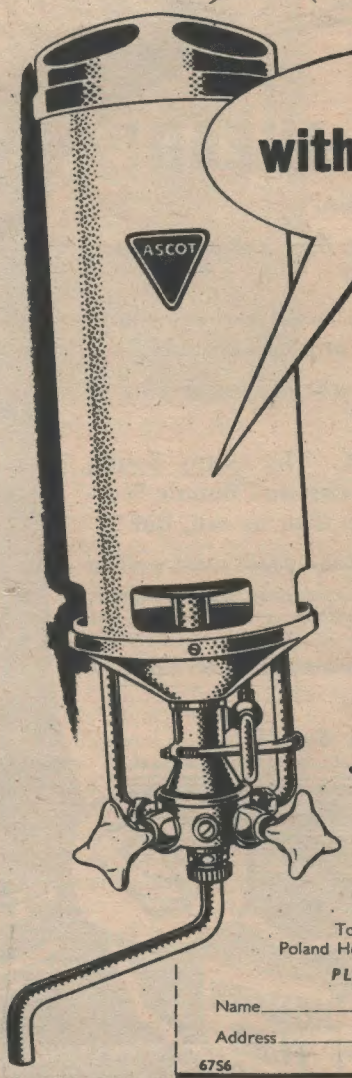

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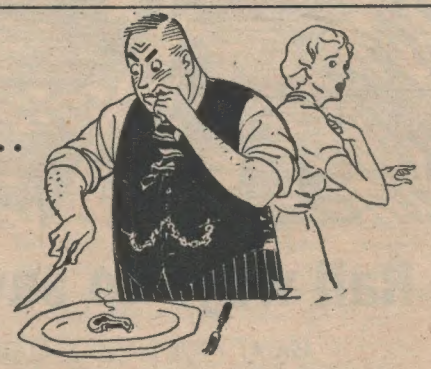

a pipe of BONDMAN SATISFIES

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Cool, fragrant, lasting Bondman! So many men find it such a grand smoke that tobacconists quickly sell out. But it's worth looking for—there's nothing quite as good.

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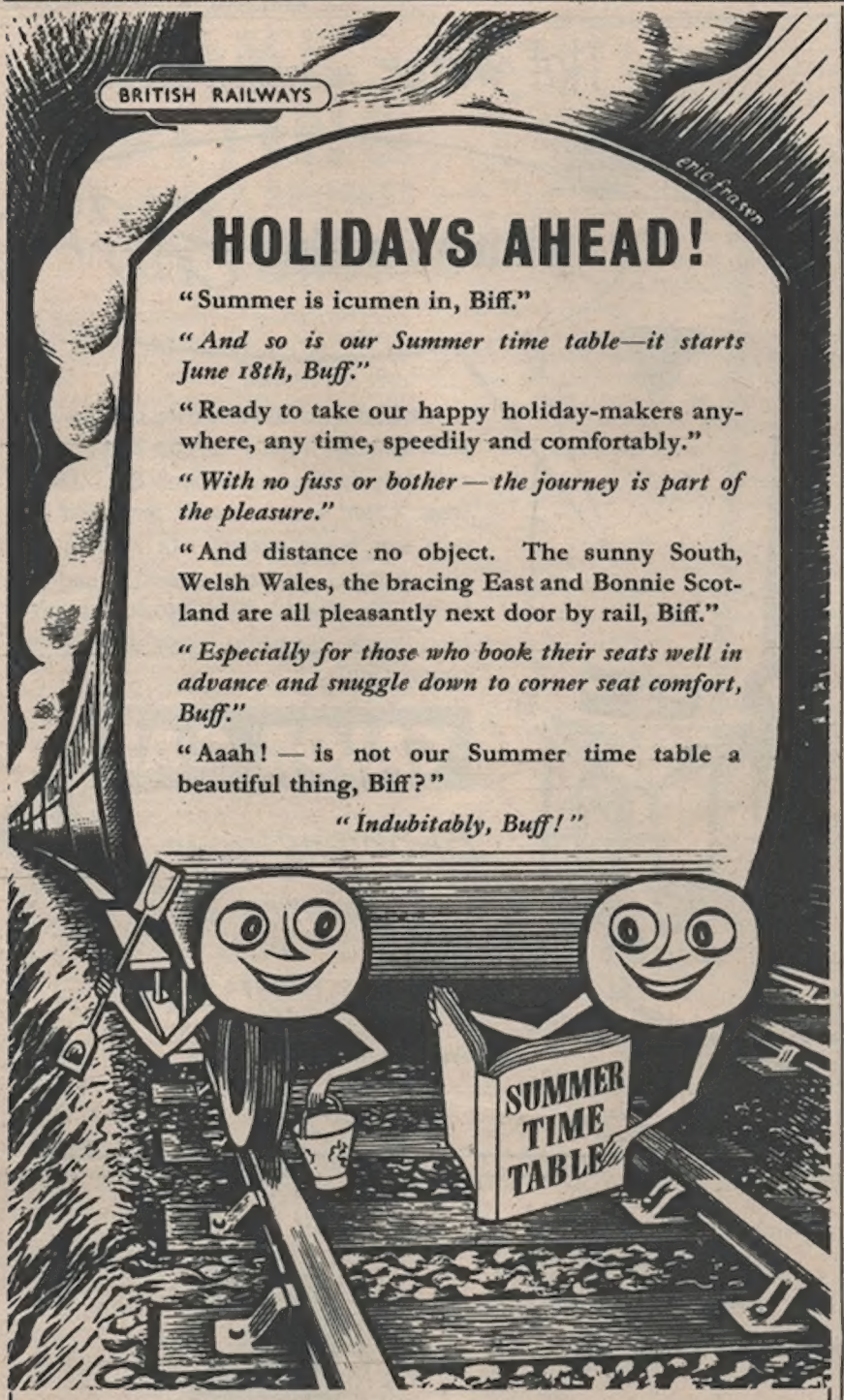

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"And so is our Summer time table—it starts June 18th, Buff."

"Ready to take our happy holiday-makers anywhere, any time, speedily and comfortably."

"With no fuss or bother — the journey is part of the pleasure."

"And distance no object. The sunny South, Welsh Wales, the bracing East and Bonnie Scotland are all pleasantly next door by rail, Biff."

"Especially for those who book their seats well in advance and snuggle down to corner seat comfort, Buff."

"Aaah! — is not our Summer time table a beautiful thing, Biff?"

"Indubitably, Buff!"

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Personna Blades are Hollow-ground, *so sharp that they can split a human hair into seven separate strands, as regular factory tests prove. This picture is a still from a Pathé Pictorial film, taken at the Personna factory.*

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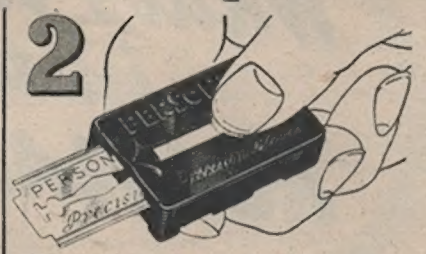

The quick, easy way that blades are changed. *Blades are* spring-suspended *in the Zipak — a flick of the thumb puts them straight into your razor, unwrapped, untouched, and ready for instant use.*

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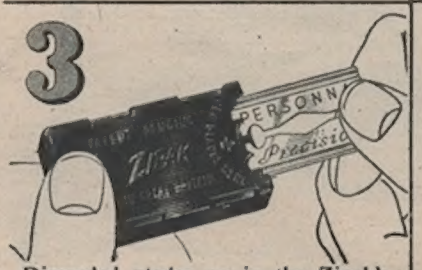

Discarded blades go in the Zipak's convenient underside compartment. *Makeshift arrangements for getting rid of old blades are a thing of the past. And Zipak is a* safety *precaution— particularly with children in the house.*

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Shave with Personna and you shave with Precision

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PHENSIC tablets bring quick, safe relief from pain *because* they contain a blend of ingredients which work together perfectly.

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PHENSIC tablets soothe strained or overtired nerves, so that you can sleep soundly at night and awake refreshed.

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Keep a supply of PHENSIC tablets by you. **1/8 & 4/-.** Also in handy envelope pack **4d.**

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THE SAFE WAY

to relieve **HEADACHES, NERVE PAINS, RHEUMATIC PAINS, MUSCULAR PAIN SUMMER COLDS AND CHILLS**

AMAZING AFRICA (1)

A lioness feeds on the warm carcass of a buck. Her companion raises her head to roar at Alastair Scobie, who took this photograph at Tsavo

ALASTAIR SCOBIE went on a six-month tour of Africa to see men and women of the world's most colourful continent. Here, in the first article of a brilliant new series, he tells the story of . . .

The hunter who loves lions

"Tabs," warden of Tsavo Park. To the natives he is Bwana Simba—"Master Lion"

IN THE FAR DISTANCE rise the snow-capped peaks of Mount Kilimanjaro, strangely white against the blue East African sky. Except for the little stations down the single-track railway from Mombasa to Nairobi, there is no sign of life. No friendly farms, no grazing herds, no little native huts break the eternal horizon of tangled thorn trees. Nothing moves here but the elephant and the rhinoceros, the lion and the antelope—excepting, of course, the tourists.

By a brilliant stroke, thousands of square miles of useless, arid country have been turned into a Mecca for people who love animals, and the Tsavo National Park, one of the many similar "parks" in Africa, attracts people from all over the world who want to see and photograph big game. In the season, cars creep down the wide dirt roads, and the little hotels that have sprung up nearby are full to overflowing. What was once a millionaire's sport has come within reach of the upper-middle income, and everyone benefits—the tourists, the hotel-keepers and the animals.

One hot afternoon a few months ago an American visitor to the Tsavo Park pulled up his big car at the roadside where a lioness lay in the sun, supremely indifferent to the affairs of mankind, adjusted his ciné-camera and stepped out of his car to get a close-up. He paid little attention to the smart green truck that squealed to a stop behind him, or to the stocky man who almost sauntered over and introduced himself as the lioness got growling to her feet.

"Excuse me, sir, I'm a game warden. Please get back in your car. . . ." His tone of voice was enough, and the tourist left the lioness to her own devices. "You see," explained the warden when they stopped a few hundred yards down the road, "she has cubs, and I was terrified she was going to charge you. There is a rule here that you mustn't get out of your car to photograph dangerous game."

"Dangerous?" asked the American, sweat

In the hot sun, Taberer and his dog romp with Iola, the lioness. She was reared on the bottle

breaking out on his brow. "You mean to say these lions aren't tame?"

And the warden, W. H. M. Taberer, known to all East Africa as "Tabs," explained once again that the hundreds of big-game animals in the park are as wild as they were before the white man set foot in Africa.

"People won't believe they're wild," he says, "because they lie and let themselves be photographed. They're losing their fear of man, for no one is allowed to shoot or hunt them. We do try to put up notice boards telling people to stay in their cars, but the elephants knock the boards down as fast as I put them up."

Father Fined Him For Poaching

Tabs, who controls the western half of the 7,000 square miles of "park," is the perfect figure of a game warden. Stocky, muscular and red-faced from nearly half a century of African sunlight, he dresses in hunting shirt, shorts and a battered hat decorated with a strip of skin from a man-eating lion he shot on the outskirts of the park. His green truck covers hundreds of miles a day as he goes on his rounds, and his duties include lion and elephant hunting, tracking ivory poachers, and developing the great area under his control to bring the tourist to the animals—and the animals to the tourists.

Born in Southern Rhodesia, son of the then Chief Native Commissioner, Tabs became a big-game hunter on leaving university. Ivory was fetching high prices, and Taberer, just out of his teens, was fast becoming a crack elephant hunter. "Not to mention a poacher," he says. "I thought I was being very smart poaching elephants—shooting them without taking out an expensive elephant licence. It was only when I was heavily fined by my own father that I became a reformed character." Today Tabs himself is the bane of the ivory-poachers of Tsavo.

In the early 1920s he became a game control officer, in charge of a district in Southern Rhodesia, charged with the task of shooting as many animals as he could. The theory was that the deadly tsetse fly was harboured by the game animals, and by shooting out the game and burning the bush, the tsetse would be eliminated. Tabs shudders at the slaughter of those early years.

"I was young, a good shot and proud of it. I shot and shot and shot, until one day I was sickened by the whole business, and laid down my rifle." Though shooting animals is still part of his job, it is the part he likes least.

Today Taberer lives with his wife and their seven-year-old daughter in a camp in the heart of the Tsavo Park. Their dining-room is a thatched roof suspended on poles beneath a huge baobab tree. There is a sleeping caravan, a thatched kitchen, a collection of tents and a mud-walled office filled with rhino horns and sporting rifles, and at night a great fire burns to keep off the wild animals that prowl through the bush on the way to their drinking holes.

Mrs. Taberer keeps house graciously under the baobab tree. Her furniture is in store, waiting the completion of their house, now in construction on the crest of a hill overlooking miles of game-haunted country and the glaciers of Kilimanjaro. Women visitors, taking tea at the rough trestle table, seated on the camp-chairs which Taberer himself has upholstered in lion skin, either rave about the life of a game warden's wife or shudder and say: "My dear, how can you *live* out here? I'd be terrified!"

"And from time to time I *am* terrified," Mrs. Taberer admits. "One night the elephants got so close that I could see them moving through the trees in the darkness, just outside the camp. Then the dogs started to bark. It was a horrible moment, for elephants are so timid and easily scared, for all their size. They hate dogs, and when they stampede—well, the sight of the trees round here will tell you what happens." For many miles round the camp the trees are split and shattered by the big beasts.

"But I like the elephants," says Mrs. Taberer. "My day isn't complete until I've seen at least one. The lions? No, I'm not really frightened of lions, for I can always shut myself in the caravan if Tabs is away on safari, as he so often must be."

Elephant Antics On The Dam

Life among the elephants is difficult, in some ways. The warden is busy building a rest camp for visitors on the side of a mountain at Ngulia, with neat little stone cabins and hot and cold running water. Tembo, the elephant, has been one of the biggest hold-ups in the building programme. When, for instance, a dam was built to provide fresh water for the camp, the elephants gathered each night to drink and cavort on the concrete wall, and the fresh concrete simply sagged under their weight.

To get over this difficulty, Tabs had to build another dam for the elephants, lower down the slope of the hill and more easily reached. "With the result," he says, "that the visitor to the camp will be able to watch elephants in comfort any moonlight night."

Tsavo was once notorious for its lions. It was there, fifty years ago, that two man-eaters held up the construction of the railway for weeks, killing and eating about thirty persons until they were tracked down and shot. Now the lions are well fed on buck and are indifferent to mankind.

Taberer has a score of native names, from his Rhodesian name of "Pon," given him at birth, to the current "Bwana Simba"—Master Lion. He gained this in an episode talked of by local natives to this day.

During a drought last year, some Masai herdsmen asked permission to camp in the park until the rains let them move back to their own arid pastures. Taberer was loth to grant this permission, for the national parks are closed to all human habitation, and the land is given over entirely to the needs of the animals. Yet he was equally ready to help the Masai—if they would promise to leave the lions in peace.

Lioness Jumped On To His Lap

"You must take an oath," Taberer told the headman, "not to harm my lions." The old headman, leaning gracefully on his lion spear, agreed willingly enough, but Taberer knew only too well the eagerness of the Masai "Morani" (warriors) for a good, old-fashioned lion hunt. He was pondering in his camp chair when a huge lioness bounded out of the forest and jumped straight on to his lap, almost knocking him out of his chair.

The spears of the warriors went back to throw, but Taberer called: "Stop! I said you must not harm a lion." What the tribesmen did not know was that the lioness was Iola, Taberer's pet, reared by him from a tiny cub.

"Kill one of the lions," said Taberer, making the most of his opportunity, "and they will come to tell me of it. They are my friends." The Masai grazed their cattle in the Tsavo National Park that year, and there were no lion hunts.

Iola became a favourite in Kenya, and people who knew her travelled for hundreds of miles to see how she was getting on. Sensing that human beings liked her, Iola responded by growing into probably the tamest lioness that ever existed. She had the run of the camp until her size made her something of a menace, especially to Taberer's little daughter.

"She never unsheathed a claw or bared her teeth at the child," Mrs. Taberer explains, "but Iola weighed more than 300 pounds, and just bowled the poor kid over every time she tried to play with her."

The Day Iola Joined Her Kind

As a seven-month-old cub, Iola's life was despaired of when she caught rickets, a common disease of captive lions, but Tabs gave her cod-liver oil and calcium injections, and fed her from a feeding bottle when she was too weak to rise. Iola still liked to drink from her bottle, even when nearly full-grown. Tabs let his pet run wild when she recovered, half hoping that she would rejoin her own kind; one day she did run off into the bush when she heard lions roaring nearby.

Regretfully, Tabs watched her go. But she was not long away, and after that one escapade never showed any desire to return to her wild friends who roared around camp with an invitation to spend an evening in the bush with them. She preferred people.

This preference had some queer results. One night Tabs cycled down to Mac's Inn at Mtito Andei, and did not hear the soft pad-pad of great paws behind him. Iola was following her beloved master. At the inn, Tabs was taken aback by the greeting he got.

"People dived off in all directions," he says. "One chap vaulted over the bar. Another was shouting for his rifle. I thought they'd all gone mad."

Then he turned and saw Iola, very large and friendly, standing in the doorway and blinking in the light. When things were explained, Iola became the guest of honour and strolled in the

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Uncle Dennis does the conjuring and puppet work. Auntie Jean sings and organizes contests

Magic uncle of the seaside

by MARJORIE EARL

Dennis Collins is the answer to a parent's prayer. As a full-time universal uncle, he keeps the children safe and happy

IN THE SUMMER OF 1949, twenty-seven year old Dennis Collins was ready to relinquish his ambition to make a living as an actor. Nobody wanted to buy his talent. One morning, as a final fling at the footlights, he took a few minutes off from his clerical job at the Cambridge branch of the Ministry of Transport to write a letter. He had just read in the newspapers that the Norfolk seaside resort of Hunstanton intended to jazz up its summer programme with some new tourist attractions. He had a suggestion for the civic authorities.

"Why don't you have a children's entertainer?" he asked. "He could organize games on the beach, give stage shows in the afternoon, and incidentally be the answer to a holidaying parent's prayer by taking over the children for a few hours every day." By return mail the answer came back.

It was a good suggestion, the town clerk said, and had Mr. Collins any more? He had. He had a show and a programme all ready, and could give the council some samples if they were interested. Soon Collins had completed arrangements to do two shows a week on a trial basis.

An angular, lantern-jawed comic who wears horn-rimmed spectacles and looks down on his young audiences from a height of six feet two inches, Collins is now established as the universal uncle of hundreds of children from all over Britain. His partner, and the "straight man" of his act, is his wife Jean, a plump, good-natured girl who is Auntie Jean to his Uncle Dennis.

The 1949 trial run at Hunstanton meant taking time off from regular jobs in Cambridge to do shows on Thursday and Saturday afternoon. Jean decided to work half-time. Dennis took his annual holiday in Thursday afternoons. On Saturday afternoon he was off anyway. It was a hard grind, working all day, rehearsing at night and making the fifty-six mile journey to Hunstanton twice a week in an old car. But it was worth it. For last year the Collinses got a straight nine-week engagement, and before it was over they had signed a contract for twelve weeks this summer. They gave up their office jobs and a lifetime's ambition for both of them was fulfilled. They were professional entertainers at last.

Since childhood, Collins had been ambitious to get on the professional stage. "I've been on the stage as long as I can remember, but only as an amateur," he says. During the war, when he was in the Navy, he organized concert parties, broadcast in Singapore, acted in a theatre club in Sydney. When he was demobilized he hunted for a stage job until he had used up all his gratuity. Then he worked in a Cambridge mortuary, helping to dismember corpses. "It was only until I had saved enough money to go back to London and have another bash at getting on the stage," he says.

But next time the story was unchanged, and he returned to Cambridge and became a postman. About four months later he had saved enough for another attempt in London. This time he tried the films, without success.

Learning To Be A Conjurer

Finally, after he had taken the Ministry of Transport job, his life-long ambition was realized in a most unexpected way when he and his wife were engaged by Hunstanton. It was also realized rather abruptly. Collins suddenly found himself a children's entertainer without much of an act for children. He had been doing some spare-time performing at children's parties with marionettes, but the marionettes, he felt, were not enough for a regular turn. So he decided to become a conjurer.

He borrowed elementary conjuring books from the public library. Early in his career as a magician he decided that he ought to aim at becoming a member of the Magic Circle, that mystical organization of cardinal conjurers. To do this he had to submit an application signed by two members, and to secure their recommendations he had to demonstrate his skill. He chose as a sponsor John Gambling, one of the world's most accomplished magicians, president of the International Brotherhood of Magicians.

One morning, after he had been studying and practising for about a year, Collins packed up his props and went to see the master, now eighty and living in retirement in Cambridge. He explained what he wanted. "Hm!" said Gambling gruffly. "Well, let's see what you can do. I suppose you want a table." He placed one, then retired to a corner, folded his arms and arranged his features into a terrifying scowl. "Go ahead."

Collins, who by this time felt slightly less competent than the rawest beginner, set out his props and started his patter. He was just stumbling over the punch line of his first joke and preparing to introduce his trick when Gambling jumped up, threw up his hands and started to shout: "Rotten, rotten! Don't you see the mirror? If you were a conjurer at all you would have insisted that it be moved." Collins discovered that Gambling had tricked him by placing the table near a mirror which plainly revealed all his magical manoeuvres.

Punch And Judy Are Essential

However, this mishap did not break up the audition. He demonstrated two tricks, and when he had finished Gambling signed his application, with the injunction that he must keep practising. Now a member of the Magic Circle, Collins has faithfully followed this advice.

Conjuring has become the basis of his Hunstanton show. This is a daily, seventy-five minute turn held every afternoon on the promenade. Jean plays the piano, sings and organizes competitions. Dennis performs with his marionettes and a Punch and Judy show. "A children's holiday show just wouldn't be right without Punch and Judy," he says.

Last summer Collins's conjuring skill was put to an exacting test. The amphitheatre is in the

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Furious at the way he'd hit the animal, Marion boxed the young man's ears. "If I catch you doing that again," she said, "you'll never forget it"

A girl like Marion

by ***DUDLEY HOYS***

ILLUSTRATED BY CASWELL

She was not the type of girl you'd expect on a farm. And Jinks was not the usual kind of pet. Between them they brought war—and peace—to the district

FOR SOME WHILE AFTER the sheep-stealing started in Iredale, nobody had the slightest idea that it was going on. Among these West Cumberland fells, the flocks spend most of the year on the heights. It would be impossible for any farmer to make a frequent check. Piling up to altitudes of 3,000 feet, the country is a chaos of brackens and boulders, heathery knolls, dark, whispering cracks where becks have cut deep into the rock, broken staircases of crags, and fans of scree. It would take an army of men to comb that wilderness.

Among the unsuspecting victims was John Leece, who farmed Fold End. He had about two thousand acres of fell grazing on either side of the dale. A lean, grey-haired man, with rather placid blue eyes and a wide mouth, he had made money during the past ten years, in startling contrast to the previous arid period of farming. But the long habit of hard work and careful spending was too enduring to be broken. His only extravagance was to send his daughter Marion to an expensive boarding school in the south. She went there at the age of twelve, a couple of months after her mother died, and left when she was eighteen.

Marion puzzled him. He had toyed vaguely with the idea of her going in for some ladylike career. She would have none of that. On all her holidays she insisted on working on the farm. When she finished with school that summer term and came back to Fold End, she told her father: "I want to get down to work here. In the open."

"Ay," he said, and scanned her in appraising silence. He realized that here was no longer a schoolgirl, but a young woman. There were strange contrasts about her. In some ways, he reckoned, she resembled a film star, with her jet black, shining hair, fine features and pale skin, and her lips wonderfully soft and red. Her eyes were dark, with a kind of stormy splendour. But her hands were big and strong and eager, and she obviously had no interest in dress.

"Ay," he said again. "You know plenty about fell farming."

"O.K. You've only got Harry Sim, and you've been working too hard. I ought to be able to take some of that off your shoulders."

The following week, he registered her as an employed worker and, shortly after that, he had

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FOR THE RECORD—A JOHN BULL SPECIAL

The Battle of Baltinglass

by LAWRENCE EARL

It began as a storm in an Irish teacup—a village row over the postmistress and her job. With fantastic speed it grew into a national crisis that helped to overthrow a Cabinet

Helen Cooke, around whom the storm centred, prepares to quit her post office

WITH A POPULATION OF 860, Baltinglass is barely more than a cluster of houses and shops sprawled around a T-shaped road junction thirty-eight miles south-west of Dublin. Its people have the reputation of living quietly within themselves, and, indeed, nothing of note has happened there for years.

That is, until The Battle.

It began, with deceptive tranquillity, on a misty April day in 1950 when Katie Cooke, an ailing spinster of eighty-two, resigned as sub-postmistress, secure in the belief that her niece and assistant, Helen Cooke, would succeed her. This simple act set in motion an almost incredible series of events which culminated one dawn, eight months later, in the wailing of an alarm siren which brought a raging populace out of their homes. Their aim was to resist seventy civic guards who had descended upon the post office. Bloodshed seemed inevitable.

The prolonged Battle of Baltinglass, an uprising by a democratic people against a government which they thought had turned a blind eye to justice, had other exotic ingredients: an aircraft with a public address system, a slab of cold concrete, a cousin of the Queen, a letter from a dying priest, and the capture of the attention of a large part of the world Press.

When a representative of the Dail, Eire's Parliament, spoke of the affair as "only a storm in a teacup," a Baltinglass man retorted: "It's grown into a damn big teacup and the tea is spilling out all over the country." Months later, when the Government resigned, the Battle of Baltinglass was quoted as one of the reasons.

"Have You Heard The News?"

Many were responsible for what happened, and the supporters of Helen Cooke are themselves happy to share the credit; yet, but for Bernard Sheridan, a husky six-footer of thirty who had come to Baltinglass out of Ireland's west five years before, the battle might never have been fought.

It was on Thursday, November 23, last year, that Sheridan went shooting pheasant. It was an overcast afternoon, cold but not quite freezing, and he had bagged four birds. By five o'clock, the light had become bad and he stopped at Fanning's pub in Coolakenna for a drink of malt whiskey to warm himself up. It was half past seven when he stepped inside his own door on the main street of Baltinglass. "Bernie," his wife said, "have you heard the news?"

"What news would that be?"

"Miss Cooke has lost the post office," she said.

"That's terrible—it couldn't be!" Sheridan exclaimed. A small town is like a large family, and Sheridan was shocked at the news. He knew that without the small income Helen Cooke would get from being sub-postmistress, she and her aunt would be unable to live. He also knew that twenty-seven year old Michael Farrell had applied for the job, but most villagers had believed Miss Cooke would get the appointment.

Sheridan Decides To Act

"It's a true fact, Bernie," his wife said. "Miss Cooke rang up, asking for you, and told me." Then she added: "Aren't you going to eat your dinner, Bernie?"

"I don't feel like my dinner," he said. He could not get Helen Cooke out of his mind. He had known her for the five years since he had come to Baltinglass from Ballinalee and had always found her scrupulously fair in everything she did. In addition to running the post office, as her ailing aunt's assistant for the past fourteen years, she had operated the Baltinglass telephone exchange. Sheridan decided to act. The first thing he did was to telephone Soup Doyle, a publican like himself. "Have you heard the news?" he asked Doyle.

"Yes. It's terrible."

"Will you help me if I set about to form a committee?" There was a pause, and Soup

asked: "What kind of a committee?" Sheridan replied: "A protest committee."

"Well, Mr. Sheridan," Doyle said, "I don't know. This is a dangerous affair to meddle with." Sheridan was disappointed at this lukewarm response. "All right," he said, and hung up, wondering if this would be the reaction of all Baltinglass. If it were, he thought, the outlook seemed bad for Helen Cooke.

Sheridan soon discovered, however, that there were several in the village who thought as he did. Next morning, with Godfrey Timmons, Paul Kehoe and Patrick O'Grady, he drove to Dublin on Miss Cooke's behalf. O'Grady was to see Sean MacBride, the Minister of External Affairs, while Timmons and Kehoe were to buttonhole party officials. Sheridan, himself, planned to interview General Sean MacEoin, the Minister of Justice. Of the four, only Sheridan succeeded in seeing his man, but MacEoin said: "Listen, sonny, why in the name of God didn't you come to me forty-eight hours before Michael Farrell's appointment was made? Now it's too late."

Fight It Tooth And Nail

Gloomy in their failure, the four Baltinglass men drove back to the village. "Well," O'Grady asked, "what's our next move, Bernie?"

"There's only one thing for us to do now," Sheridan said. "That is to form a committee of the people of Baltinglass. We've got to fight this tooth and nail."

Patrick Cogan, a big, bluff Deputy to the Dail, saw Prime Minister John Costello that Friday afternoon. Cogan, an Independent Farmer from County Wicklow, had always voted on the side of the Coalition Government. He outlined the Cooke case. "I think something ought to be done about it," he said, "before there's trouble in Baltinglass." Costello assured Cogan that he would discuss it with James Everett, the Minister for Posts and Telegraphs.

On Saturday morning a group of Baltinglass businessmen, including Sheridan, met in Felix O'Neill's ice-cream parlour. They were the nucleus of the Protest Committee—Ben Hooper, John Doyle, Felix O'Neill, Luke McDonald, Paul Kehoe, Godfrey Timmons and one or two others. They decided to hold a public meeting in the town hall, a stone building facing the village square, at eight o'clock on Monday evening to test the feeling of the people. Signs were painted to announce the meeting, and Sheridan drove to a neighbouring town and hired a public address system. Meanwhile, it was decided to ask Major-General Meade Dennis, who lived three miles away, to be chairman at the meeting, and to ask The O'Mahoney, chief of all the O'Mahoneys, to speak, together with Cogan and Tim Brennan, another Dail Deputy.

The General Takes A Hand

That afternoon a member of the Protest Committee telephoned General Dennis and asked him if he would take the chair. Dennis, a slender man in his fifties, with a thin face and a sandy moustache, demurred at first. "I'll have to think about it," he said. Dennis was a member of the Protestant aristocracy who, traditionally, kept clear of village skirmishes. But later that day he decided to take on the chairmanship.

On Monday, Sheridan, who was an amateur electrician, set up the public address system in the town hall, with one loudspeaker outside the building. Then he waited for the meeting. At ten minutes to eight there were only a dozen people in the hall. The palms of Sheridan's hands began to sweat. At five to eight the hall was half full. At three minutes to eight, Sheridan spoke over the outside speaker. "The meeting is about to commence," he said, and, all at once, the hall was packed. There were 600 inside and more huddled in shop doorways around the square for protection against the icy mist, listening to the loudspeaker.

The general opened the meeting. "The idea of our gathering," he said, "is to get a mandate from the people to act on Miss Helen Cooke's behalf." He appealed to Michael Farrell to resign. "Nobody holds any animosity towards him or his family," he added.

Then Patrick Green, one of Farrell's firmest supporters, scrambled upon the stage. "What right have you to say you represent the people of Baltinglass?" he shouted at the general.

Dennis turned to the crowd. "Have I the right?" he asked. The crowd roared approval.

A poster parade outside Helen Cooke's post office. Bernard Sheridan is on the extreme left.

"This Place Smells," Says Tom

At three o'clock in the afternoon of Thursday, November 30, an engineer with a gang of ten linesmen arrived in Baltinglass. They parked their lorry outside the drapery shop and public house owned by Michael Farrell's father. They piled out and began to dig a trench right across Mill Street and up the pavement into the shop. It was to carry the telephone cable into the new post office, but the workmen would still have to disconnect the cable leading into Miss Cooke's before the new switchboard could be used.

Tom Morrissey, a local shop assistant, walked over to where the men were digging. "This place smells," Morrissey said, with a grimace. One of the men looked up. "What the hell do you mean?"

"I mean you've cut in on a sewer," Morrissey said, and walked away.

The general had been hard put to make his decision to side with Miss Cooke, but having made his decision he was in the fight all the way. He decided to call on The O'Mahoney, who was in bed with three broken ribs. When The O'Mahoney, a lean man with sunken cheeks, heard the news of the laying of the new telephone cable, he exploded.

"If I was a fit man—pity I'm not—I'd go in there to Baltinglass and get myself arrested," he said. "It would make good reading in the Dublin papers tomorrow. Picture the headline: 'THE O'MAHONEY OF WICKLOW ARRESTED IN BALTINGLASS'!"

The general returned to report to the Protest Committee. The O'Mahoney had given him an idea. He suggested to the Committee that they should picket the Cooke post office and prevent the linesmen from disconnecting the cable there. "There should always be someone there to be arrested," he said. "We must get publicity."

Sheridan jumped to his feet. "I'm prepared to be arrested, General. Who else will come with me?" Paul Kehoe, a member of the Wicklow County Council, and Patrick O'Grady joined him.

Ben Hooper suggested that there should be a woman in the picket. Annie Jackson, a Mill Street publican, was approached. "I'm ready," she said, her round face alight.

Next morning, Miss Jackson, Sheridan, O'Grady and Kehoe marched up and down in front of Cooke's carrying placards. They read: "Baltinglass Demands Justice: No Removal of Post Office," and "Baltinglass Demands Clean Administration." (Some days later Deputy Sean Lemass said, in the Dail, that Helen Cooke "had every possible qualification except one. She had no political pull. The other candidate for the position was a Mr. Michael Farrell, and he, so far as the views of the local inhabitants are concerned, had no qualifications for the office except one. He had a political pull.")

People passing in the Dublin buses stared at the pickets, wondering what was up. To date, hardly a mention of the affair had appeared in the Press.

That morning, however, Sheridan ducked into Miss Cooke's to telephone the *Irish Press*, a Dublin morning newspaper, and told them of the picket. As a result, reporter Martin Fallon arrived in Baltinglass that afternoon. He was the vanguard of Pressmen from Britain and America who were soon to spread the story of the Battle around the world.

Fifty Pickets Volunteer

During the afternoon, a Mrs. Kenna approached Sheridan as he picketed. She wanted to help. "And are you prepared to picket here and be arrested if necessary?" Sheridan asked. She said she was, and Sheridan wrote her name down. Soon the word spread that the lists were open for volunteer pickets. By the day's end, fifty townsfolk had volunteered.

In mid-afternoon, two of the Government linesmen walked the 150 yards from Farrell's to Cooke's, carrying a heavy bag of tools. Patrick O'Grady, standing on the concrete slab which covered the cable connection, grinned uncertainly at John A. Doyle. "Here they come," he said.

Doyle, a big man, blocked the doorway leading into the Cooke post office, but the linesmen ignored him. They went straight to the

Second from right, Felix O'Neill

Michael Farrell, who was given the post office job. Here, with his mother, he is serving in his drapery shop

slab. O'Grady stood tensely on it, a slight man with pale cheeks and dark eyes. "What do *you* want?" he demanded.

"We want to dig up this slab."

"You'll not!"

The linesman snorted, eyeing O'Grady's slender figure. "And who are you to stop us?"

"You'll take this slab up," O'Grady said, "over my dead body."

"That goes for me, too," Doyle growled.

The second linesman had been silent. Now he tugged at his mate's sleeve. "Come on away," he urged. "We're not going to mix it with them just yet."

As the two linesmen withdrew, Sheridan again ducked into Cooke's. This time he telephoned the general, who arrived on the spot a few minutes later with his wife. Mrs. Dennis asked to be put on picket duty on the slab. Soon McNulty, the Government engineer, approached her. "Do you really think you're going to stop us, Mrs. Dennis?" he asked.

Ancient Tradition Shattered

She looked at him coolly. "You'll have to have me moved by the police before you get me off this slab," she said. McNulty retired. This action of Mrs. Dennis's helped to knit the Cooke supporters still more tightly together. She and her husband had now shattered an ancient tradition by standing and fighting side by side with the villagers.

Sheridan had arranged a tight and efficient information network among friends in Dublin. Word came down that there would be no attempt that night to disconnect Cooke's cable. Accordingly, the picket was withdrawn at eight that night. Next morning, it began again. Meanwhile, Helen Cooke, a small woman, prematurely white, with a button nose and mild blue eyes, had received instructions from the embarrassed postal headquarters to carry on at her post office until otherwise instructed.

Saturday and Sunday passed quietly. Sheridan had extended his intelligence system to Carlow, fifteen miles to the west, where the linesmen had a sub-headquarters. A friend there was to telephone him if they started out.

By Monday, December 4, newspapermen had begun to fly in from London. Soon the telephone wires hummed with long messages, and all over the world the Cooke case was presented to newspaper readers. Then it was announced that, on Wednesday, Deputy Cogan would bring the matter up in the Dail. Fifty expectant villagers drove up to Dublin.

"Is the Minister aware," Cogan asked, "that the post office has been in the hands of the Cooke family for over seventy years, and that Miss Cooke has given fourteen years' satisfactory service in that post office? These two defenceless women have now been ruthlessly deprived of their means of livelihood in order to make an appointment for a hanger-on of the Minister's party."

Everett began his reply. Another Deputy interrupted him hotly: "You are a dirty, low-down rat." This extraordinary un-parliamentary behaviour brought roars from both sides of the floor and, in scenes of wild disorder, the Deputy Speaker declared the House adjourned.

The Baltinglass visitors had witnessed the uproar from the public gallery. They had been warned by Cogan to contain themselves in the event of trouble, but the excitement proved too much for Des Cullen, a Baltinglass chemist. "Put Everett out!" he shouted wildly. The Clerk of the Dail pointed him out to a guard: "Hold that man!" Cullen was detained for questioning but soon released with a caution.

Dying Priest Writes To P.M.

On Thursday, December 7, Father Doyle, seriously ill with a heart trouble which was soon to take him to his grave, dictated a letter to the Prime Minister in which he appealed for a settlement of the post office dispute. The O'Mahoney also wrote to Premier Costello, threatening to resign as chairman of the West Wicklow Fine Gael party, the chief Government party in the Coalition. And, that afternoon, Mrs. Daphne Lalor, the wife of a farmer who lived two miles from Baltinglass, drove in to the post office and sought out Sheridan. She offered her help.

"Certainly, Mrs. Lalor," Sheridan responded. "You can picket and relieve some of those ladies so they can have a meal." At half-past one, Mrs. Lalor replaced Mrs. Kenna on the picket line and carried a placard. Sheridan moved across the street to talk to one of the Dublin newsmen. A policeman rushed over to them. "Do you know who is picketing there now?" he asked. He seemed excited.

"Yes, it's Mrs. Lalor, the wife of a farmer up the road," Sheridan said. The policeman shook his head: "That's not all she is. She is also a second cousin of the Queen of England."

It was true. The reporter, somewhat nervously, asked her for an interview. "If an interview will help Miss Cooke," Mrs. Lalor said, "you can have it."

That night, supporters of Michael Farrell held a torchlight procession up and down Main Street. One placard they carried read: "People of Baltinglass Want No Relations with the Queen of England."

The Sirens Begin To Wail

On Friday night, at a meeting of the Protest Committee, it was decided to end the picketing. Instead, Sheridan borrowed two hooters from a garage and fastened them outside his bedroom window to warn the village in case of attack.

Then, at midnight on Sunday, Des Cullen knocked urgently at Sheridan's door. "The word has just come from Dublin," Cullen announced. "They're arriving in the morning at half-past seven—post office engineers and the gardai with them." The gardai are the national police of Eire. At seven fifteen on Monday morning, Sheridan pressed the switch of his warning siren and the hooters wailed mournfully. The village woke up, angry and eager.

Soon, more than a hundred Baltinglass citizens were milling around in front of Cooke's. Cars and vans poured in from outlying districts. It was bitterly cold and a driving sleet slanted down from a sullen sky. At seven thirty there was no sign of the enemy. Helen Cooke, meanwhile, had brewed tea and was passing cups of it around to her supporters.

At five minutes to eight, two police cars drove up, followed, a moment later, by six more cars and two lorries. There were about seventy police in all. The chief superintendent for County Wicklow, a big, weather-beaten man named Quinn, climbed out of his car, wearing a look of disbelief as he saw the reception committee. The raid had been planned as a surprise.

Just at that moment, Soup Doyle charged into the crowd. He was excitedly waving an ancient gun, a relic of the troubles of 1798. There was now no doubt regarding his participation, and none about the temper of the crowd. They were ready to fight.

NEXT WEEK: Lawrence Earl concludes his reconstruction of the Battle of Baltinglass

Gregory looked down in horror. Toni's clothes were burning and a prick of flame had caught his 'chute

SOMETHING TO HOLD TO

by

MACKENZIE COTTRELL

ILLUSTRATED BY PAUL RAINER

His parents were parted; his home meant nothing. Why should he leave Matthew—and this magic new life?

IT HAPPENED SO QUICKLY that Gregory had no time for panic. Toni had flung him through the smoke-rush and the slipstream into the emptiness of starry night. For a minute, it was so awful being in nothing but nothing that his eleven-year-old body froze in a congestion of shrinking from winking stars and silvered cumulus and grey darkness miles below.

He did not seem to be falling, but a bitter wind was rushing up past him, hurting his eyes and the sandy brown of his hair. Then he pulled the ripcord, and above him there was a sound like silken sails and rippling branches, and the wind stopped with a jerk that almost cut his body in half and hurt his teeth. Then, as the 'chute turned slowly, he saw the plane like a great shaken banner of fire that was becoming a tightening corkscrew of fire.

Above him, Toni had jumped. But Toni's clothes were burning. He saw Toni slapping at them and falling in a long drop to try to put out the fire with the force of air. Then Toni's 'chute opened like a white mushroom, far below.

He shouted: "Well done, Toni! Attaboy, Toni! Good old Toni!"

Toni did not answer him. A little wisp of silver smoke and a prick of rosiness showed on Toni's 'chute. Gregory struggled to collapse his own 'chute and slide it towards Toni, as he had read of jumpers doing when a man was in trouble, so that they could both go down on the one 'chute, but the pull of the parachute was too strong for him. He kept shouting: "I'm coming, Toni!" But he could not come, and Toni's 'chute was a wild burst of fire that drew all together, licking up. He saw Toni wave to him with their particular wave. Then the 'chute went out and Toni was getting smaller, and Gregory shrieked and fainted.

When he came to, he was deep in ten-foot grass that bowed to the wind, and the 'chute was flopping and billowing and tugging him bruisingly against the grass that smelled of mould and had cutting edges. He fumbled for the snaps and battled to free the 'chute while the 'chute pummelled him into the great, dry grass stems. As the last snap gave, the harness whisked past him, hurting his cheek, and he was lying heavy and unpulled in the grass. He pushed his face against his arms and sobbed. After a while, he stood up and listened. He wanted to call Toni, but there seemed something dreadful in calling Toni when he knew what had happened to him.

Toni had been more than a friend: he had been brother and mother and father as well. More, even, than his real mother and father, for Gregory's parents were divorced. His father employed Toni as pilot of his private plane.

Gregory had known Toni's own plans. There was a village in Cuba where the mother and the grandfather and the little ones lived, and where

The meal was wonderful. Gregory felt very happy. "It was the best day I ever had," he said

there was a girl who was still in the convent school but who wrote Toni long letters in Spanish, including best wishes for the little Gregory. Toni had been going to build a fine house for them all and buy his own plane to take parties fishing to the islands and Gregory was to spend his vacations there. Now none of this would happen. . . .

The tall grass all around terrified him. He tried squeezing through the grass, but it was too strong and razor-edged. Breathing hard with his desire to escape, he began carefully cutting through the grass-stems. And after a struggle, he came out on the edge of dark silver water among the glittering darkness of water-lilies and floating plants that lifted pale spikes of flowers. And at the edge of the water, the grass lessened so that there were dwarf trees and exposed rocks and, above, the open blue of the starlit sky. Ripples and whirls crossed the water, telling of life beneath it. Having come out of the grass into the vulnerable openness of the stream's bank, Gregory was afraid. His heart thudded painfully at every sound; to every soft gurgle and rush of darkness. He wished to remain vigilant against the night, but even as he stood, the sleep of exhaustion came over him, and, finding a place where three, yard-high trees formed a sort of enclosure, he curled on the stony earth between them.

He woke to the shock of something touching his shoulder, but it was not an alligator or crocodile in the dark. It was an old man's hand in blue day. Against the sapphire sky, the old man's face was very ruddy and his thick hair and short beard were pepper-and-salt grey. He said: "Hey, sonny!" and smiled. But his face was also grave and full of pity. "You from the plane, son?"

Gregory sat up and nodded. The old man gave his shoulder a friendly squeeze, then withdrew his hand and looked away. "Other man your dad?"

"You . . . found him?" Gregory asked.

"Yep." He met Gregory's eyes and answered their question. "Yep. . . . Who else you got, son?"

In a fierce, low voice, Gregory whispered: "No one."

"Not a-tall?"

Gregory shook his head. The kindest eyes he had ever seen, except for Toni's young eyes, glanced at him and the strong old hand patted his shoulder again. After a minute, the old man stood up and extended his hand. "Well, we better go get you some breakfast!"

Gregory whispered: "Toni . . . ?"

"I fixed him a real nice place to be. Real pretty. When you feel like it, we can go and see. But put your mind easy." He looked down at Gregory. "My name's Matthew."

"I'm Gregory," Gregory said.

Matthew's shack was the most wonderful place he had ever seen. It was on a little swell of high land, no bigger than a tennis court, beside the stream. The front part was built out over the water on stilts, and the planks were faded silver-grey and felt like the silky coat of a dog.

"I know what this place is: this is the Everglades," Gregory said. His voice trembled. "Toni was showing it to me."

"Yep," said Matthew, "this is the Everglades. People call 'em mysterious and deadly and dangerous, but they're the prettiest place on earth really."

From the landing-stage, you could look up and down the waterway, and across the waterway, where the water-hyacinths and 'bonnets made a flower-bed; and then there were tall bulrushes with fat, brown velvet heads, and beyond that the grass began again, rolling like a soft sea under the wind and with the great shadows of the clouds walking across it. On the end of the stage, there was a little stone fireplace and several iron pots and pans, and Matthew made a fire that whisked and snapped in the breeze.

"Ever tasted crawfish pancakes?" Matthew asked.

"No. But I'm not hungry," Gregory said. It was not quite true. His stomach and mouth were very hungry, but it seemed wrong to Toni.

Matthew mixed meal in a bowl with water dipped wonderfully from the flowing, amber stream, then he broke in three eggs, and from a large can he took four boiled crawfish, red and spiky with goodness, and peeled and chopped the plump tails. "It's one of the bad things when you lose someone," Matthew said to the crawfish tails and the softly blowing day. "Seems like the world should stop because they aren't in the world—and seems like sort of treachery to be hungry or to think, That looks pretty! or, That smells good! I know how it was after my wife died. Seemed worst thing of all was when I began to want things and she not there. . . . But come to think, it's the wrong slant. Take your dad, now. If he was here, what would he be saying? He'd be saying, 'Come on, son! Eat your breakfast!' I reckon just about nothing could upset him more than your not having your breakfast and getting sick. . . ."

"You think so, Matthew?"

"Dead sure of it, son!"

He mixed the chopped crawfish into the batter of eggs and meal and poured it into the greased pan while the scent of browning meal rose. In a pot, coffee was bubbling, and Matthew poured out two tin cans full and added condensed milk.

"Taste this!" He turned the pancake, and when it was golden on both sides, he slid it on to a tin plate, dabbed it with butter, sprinkled it with pepper and salt and squeezed a little lime juice on it. "Some right fine limes in the big hummock on the horizon yonder. Used to be an Indian village, then a white man lived there a while. Bananas and all, growing wild. Big shell mound where you can dig up Indian pottery, too. Scientists say it's a thousand years old. . . . Like to go there one day?"

"Oh, could we? Could we really?" Gregory asked. He was eating his pancake and nothing that he had ever eaten had tasted like it.

A week later, Matthew said: "Suppose we should notify the authorities you're here. But there have been a might of things to tend to and usually somebody comes past every once in a while. . . . You're sure there's no one who is worrying?"

"No one! No one, Matthew! Matthew, don't ever notify anyone! Let me stay with you, Matthew! Please, Matthew!"

"You kind of got me over the barrel," Matthew said, swinging the boat into the correct turning of a hundred turnings between the grass walls on the way to the sea. "You see, I've kind of taken to your company and the devil keeps saying to me, 'Let the boy stay!' But then I know we can't." There was a question in his voice. "You see, even if you haven't kin, it's clear you got money and a place in the world. . . ." He answered Gregory's startled eyes. "Most boys don't have flying suits specially tailored and their daddies don't fly planes that cost thousands. . . . Must be you have a place."

"I don't want a place, Matthew! I want to stay here! I can tickle crawfish already, Matthew, and I'll learn everything——"

"It isn't altogether as simple as that. Sooner or later someone will come and ask questions. We got to face it."

"I could hide in the henhouse, Matthew! Matthew, don't make me go away! . . . If you do, I wish I hadn't eaten the pancake. If you do, I wish I was killed when the plane crashed!" He hid his face against his arm and was crying.

"Now, that won't do!" Matthew said. "Well, I guess no one can arrest us because they was too dumb to find us. . . . I guess a few weeks or months won't matter and you are just getting fine with the crawfish grain. . . . Look, now, if you go on like that you won't be able to see a craw if you step on it!"

"You won't do anything?"

"No," Matthew said slowly. "Be frank with you, I'm not real sure you've been frank with me, but every man knows his own heart. And wherever you came from, I reckon you can use a bit of Everglades. It never hurt any man to get real friendly with Nature so he knows she's not an enemy waiting for him. . . . Gives a man a kind of strength to have had nothing and still have had something. Money is a mighty fine thing, and I'm not sneezing at it, but don't ever get so confused you think there's nothing without it. Man's an awful little drop in the universe, and his bank account isn't the most important thing about him."

Gregory said, very gravely: "Yes, you're

Continued on page 31

Part 5 of BASIL DAVIDSON'S thrilling real-life series I WAS A SOLDIER-SPY

I steal across the Danube

His main task with the Jugoslav Partisans complete, Basil Davidson, British special agent, gets new orders. Something was stirring in Hungary. Base said: "Go there and find out!"

Davidson and Partisans in a maize-field hideout.

WE WERE CONTENTEDLY FILLED with eggs and bacon as we left Grk and headed towards the Danube, where Kolya was to take command of the small bands of Jugoslav Partisans among the woods on the south bank. But we knew that, from now on, we should have to move with extreme caution. The Germans in the Danube plains were thick on the ground. Here we could seldom travel by daylight; but during the hours of darkness we went where we liked. The Nazis were desperately afraid of the dark, for it brought the whirlwind Partisan assault they had learned to fear.

By the afternoon we had come to the verge of the sheltering woods and were now obliged to wait until nightfall before venturing into the open. We were ten armed men that night, but with us there were thirty invalids who were walking back to their homes in the plain.

Because of the invalids, we marched straight along the main pathway which leads to the trunk railway connecting Belgrade with Zagreb. Fifty yards from the line, in pitch darkness, the half-dozen of us who rode horses dismounted and went forward to make sure that the line was clear. As ill luck would have it, the line was not clear. The foremost of us were only thirty yards or so from the shadowed embankment when an enemy ambush awoke to furious life and showered machine gun volleys into the night.

Came Through Unscathed

Had they been Partisans who knew their business, they must have killed us all, for there was absolutely no cover. But I think they were scared by the noise of all our invalids swishing through the long grass, and thought us a powerful body of men. In any case, they did not press their advantage by pushing out one of their number on either side to enfilade us, as Partisans in ambush would have done, but simply sat tight and fired wildly. We held our fire and walked back out of range. Nobody was hurt, and the only casualty was my horse, which had bolted.

The next night we tried again, and crossed the line without incident. As the stars paled in the dawn sky, we rode up out of the plain into the green hills and copses of the Fruska Gora. This is a narrow range, called the "Pleasant Hills," which runs for a little way along the south bank of the Danube. These hills gave the Partisans their only shelter in this whole region. To the north, not many miles away, lay Hungary—and my objective.

I had been to Hungary on a secret mission some three years before. My stay then had been a curious mixture of danger and lavish soft living. There would be plenty of danger but no soft living in the task that lay ahead of me. For my mission now was to cross over the Danube into Hungary and try to find some contact with forces of resistance there—if they existed. And this was doubtful, from my information.

I reached the Danube without difficulty, riding quietly across the Fruska Gora on a fine morning until the trees thinned out and I saw below me the lakelike expanse of the greatest river in Europe. But to cross it was another matter. I knew there was no point in going across unless the sprinkling of Partisans on the other side could receive and shelter me. Otherwise I should be left at once to the tender mercies of the Hungarian garrisons which lay to the north of the Danube like numberless teams of locust.

Like Jonah From The Whale

I waited anxiously for the contacts to be arranged. But the links with our friends on the Hungarian side of the river were broken. Weeks passed. At last, one biting cold night, there came across the river the man I was waiting for. He came from out of the pitch darkness as Jonah might have come out of the belly of the whale, and he simply laid himself down, utterly exhausted, and slept for twelve hours.

This was Shatsa, a tried Partisan leader from the Hungarian side, in civil life an engineer. After the war I was to meet him again—at lunch in the Ritz, of all places—while he was visiting London in his capacity of Jugoslav Minister for Foreign Trade. But then, on that dark night of early 1944, Shatsa was an exhausted man whose pale, lined face showed privation, anxiety and anger. He reported fearful conditions on the Hungarian side, innumerable arrests, a temporary stoppage of all Partisan work. "You can't possibly go across," he argued with me. "You'd only compromise the few people whom we have left."

There was nothing to say. Bitterly, I turned my back on the Danube.

"What are you going to do?" Shatsa asked.

"I'll have to tell my headquarters that I can't get across," I answered. That meant walking back across the plains to the woods of Bosut, by the River Sava, where Sergeant Stanley Brandreth was waiting with his wireless transmitter.

I set out with an escort of two Partisans. The dusk was falling when we came down into the plains. It was a perfect night for walking, crisp and freezing underfoot, and the sky a cloudless dome of stars. Yet, for all their guidance, we lost our way in the darkness. A maze of narrow canals and ditches tricked us out of our path. Finally, a wide water-filled canal stopped us in our tracks. Beyond the canal there loomed in the night a tall, dark building.

Dule said: "There ought to be a bridge here."

"Don't talk so loud," Milovan whispered. "They'll hear us." In the tall, dark building beyond the water, fifty yards away, there was garrisoned a strong outpost of the enemy. "If they find us here," Milovan said, "they'll hold us until daylight and then they'll destroy us." We tramped up and down, looking for a bridge across the water. When we found none, we grew a little desperate. "We'll have to use the bridge by the Emilyin Farm," Dule said at last. The Emilyin Farm was the tall, black building we had seen in the darkness.

It was a nasty moment, one of the nastiest I remember. We came slowly towards the bridge, approaching it not directly but from the side, so that the sentry, if there was one, should not see us first. Dule breathed in my ear: "Can't see anything." He was right. Our luck was in. That night the enemy was slumbering, for we crossed the bridge without mishap, on tiptoes and waiting for the dogs to begin barking or for some patrol to shout and open fire on us.

We crossed and walked hard towards the south. Within an hour we could see the long, low shadow of the main line embankment reaching across the flat horizon. Downline to the right there was the mushroom of fiery smoke that betrayed an approaching train. Milovan asked: "Shall we cross now or wait for the train?"

"Let's get on," I said. "It's coming very slowly." Scared of Partisan mines, these trains never dared do much more than ten miles an hour during the hours of darkness.

Trapped By The Midnight Patrol

We were sitting in the grass within two hundred yards of the embankment, and we were about to get to our feet and run for the line when Dule clutched at us and pointed ahead. Barely visible in the darkness, a small, black column was picking its way across the sleepers. Dule swore dreadfully. "It's the midnight patrol."

We sank into the grass again. The train came rattling by, two wagons loaded with ballast in front of the engine. It was a joyful sight to see its cautious progress. Here, in the very heart of Hitler's Europe, where German generals had sworn that a partisan movement could not exist, we had made their transport at night practically impossible.

But the Partisans had laid no charges on the line that night, and the train rattled away to the lights of Mitrovitsa in the distance. By that

The Germans were strong in the Danube plains. Partisans would hide by day and raid them at night

time the patrol had walked on upline, and we were free to run across, dancing on the sleepers and jumping quickly down on the other side. Milovan had some idea about singing, but we restrained him. At dawn we saw at last the low-lying outlines of the woods of Bosut, and knew that we were safe.

We were luckier than we knew. For in those fateful days there broke upon us the full weight of the enemy's sixth anti-Partisan offensive. We had reached our friends just in time. That evening, among the dripping woods of Bosut, we gathered round our wireless receiver in our unit's "newsroom." Here in this little hut there was scarcely room to move, and the only way of coming to terms with the laws of space was for each of us to sit down exactly where he stood, and then, if no one moved, there was just room. *Vesti*, our local magazine, was being licked off a box duplicator in one corner; a nice girl called Militsa was typing some copy; Dragutin was sitting on a little hand press which my headquarters had dropped to me by parachute.

The faces of the group gathered there were set with anxiety and concentration. The news from "Free Jugoslavia" began—and the news was serious. The enemy's sixth big offensive was under way. There were reports of bitter fighting in the wilds of Bosnia. Within a day or so our own scouts reported enemy movement all around us. One night we moved back across the Sava and marched towards the sheltering hills of Bosnia. The Danube, my objective, was once more a hundred miles away.

In the weeks that followed we were marching and fighting without respite. British supplies were now flowing into Jugoslavia in an appreciable quantity. They were never the main source of Partisan supply—that was the enemy—but they helped. Back and forth in a running fight we went. But I still had my mission in Hungary to consider. At last, still determined to reach the Danube, I managed once more to make my way northward to the plains. . . .

The enemy was as thick in the plains as swallows on a summer evening. There was simply no avoiding his patrols. That was why the peasants and the Partisans—who were really the same people—had developed a special means of concealment. It was called the *baza* system. It consisted in digging an underground chamber in your yard and concealing the entrance. When German patrols from the nearest garrison drove at top speed into your village, hoping to find Partisans, you simply dodged down into the hole and sat tight until the enemy had searched the village, found nothing, and departed.

It was a splendid system—provided, of course, that nobody gave you away. For the enemy knew about the *baza* system: he knew the holes were there, but he didn't know exactly where; and so he took poles and thumped upon the ground to see if he could detect any hollowness. Where he did, he dug. And so you were caught—and shot.

A Game Of Hide-and-Seek

I myself took part in this strange game of hide-and-seek which the Partisans were constantly playing with the enemy. It happened in May while we were making our way across the plains towards the Danube with a Partisan commander named Lala and his wife. I remember that we were in a grand mood that day. Early in the morning we had slipped quietly into the little plainland village of Golubintsi. Lala, his wife and I were taken to a house where we could pass the hours of light, and were greeted by a jovial peasant and his wife. They gave us food and drink and showed us to our beds.

I had just dozed off when someone threw open the door with a crash. "Quick," the peasant was shouting, "they're just down the street." There's no time to worry in a moment like that. You simply scramble into your boots, grab your equipment and beat it as fast as you can.

"Hurry, hurry," the peasant was shouting. His wife was crying and beating her hands together against her bosom. In short order, we dodged out across the yard, through the fence and down a narrow hole in the middle of the pigsty floor. The three of us went down into that hole like mice with the cat behind them. *Thump* went the narrow door of the hole above our heads, and we knew that the peasant would spread dust and dung thickly over the square-cut door in the floor, and that there was no means of getting out until he released us.

We lay alongside each other on maize stalks laid in this burial chamber. In one corner there was an old German helmet for a use quite other than that for which its makers had intended it. Beside my head a narrow metal pipe led up to the surface: this was our only airhole. The long silent minutes grew into hours. From time to time we heard the distant echo of footsteps above our heads. As time passed, the air grew so heavy that I could no longer keep awake. My thoughts drifted away into dreams without shape or substance. Nothing seemed to matter any longer. This is the way slow suffocation kills you.

And then Lala was tugging at my shoulder. With throbbing heads, the three of us crawled painfully to the surface, and the mild light of evening was a blaze in our eyes. Our stout-hearted peasant friend pulled us out one by one. He laughed and beat Lala on the shoulder. "They've gone," he was shouting. "Came here and poked about for hours, they did. Sniffed about like a lot of dogs. But they didn't get anything out of me. Not they." And I knew that, so long as we had friends such as this, there was nothing we could not do.

Secret Of The Haywagon

Next morning a haywain stopped at a crossing over the railway line. Enemy sentries, yawning in the midday sun, stopped the wagon to examine the driver's papers. The driver was a cheerful-looking Serb in an immense *shubara*, or fur hat, which made him sweat in the summer weather. He exchanged pleasantries with the two German sentries, and the sentries, staring indifferently at the massive load of hay, waved him past.

Had they looked closer, they might have been less bored with life. For under the hay there were concealed one British officer and one British sergeant-wireless operator, together with their wireless set. By the evening, I and Sergeant George Armstrong, who had been sent to replace Brandreth, who had been invalided out, were safe in the woods of the Fruska Gora; and once again the next hurdle, the crossing of the Danube, lay right in front of me. . . .

There was thunder in the air. As I stood on the south bank of the Danube watching the other side—the enemy side—a long, thin ridge of black storm cloud formed from the east to west, like a knitted frown barring us from entry. The great river was as silent as a lake, and black with the night. Across the water enemy lights winked yellow in the darkness.

Down by the willows our companions were pumping up a rubber boat and whispering to each other. This rubber boat, a clumsy circular affair, manufactured for the R.A.F. for emergency landings in the sea, we had brought from far-off Bosnia, where British planes had dropped it by parachute. Our plan was to take it across the river, deflate and conceal it, and then hold it there as an emergency means of crossing back again. Our wooden boats could be kept only in the southern bank of the river.

Watch From The Enemy Shore

The "reception signal" from our watchers on the far bank had winked out a full fifteen minutes ago, and still we were not ready. We dared not keep our watchers waiting for long: every moment that they sat and winked their torch for us to steer by was a new risk to their lives. But Juritsa, who cared for nothing and for nobody, was laughing. "Just look at that," he said. "A rubber boat, of all things. I didn't reckon on that, you know. Partisans in a rubber boat! We'll be flying next."

"Sh-h . . ." someone whispered in the dark.

Black George came up to our little group, peering hard through the darkness and smiling confidently. Like Juritsa, he had crossed the Danube many times; he was a tough and tried Partisan who had no nerves. "We're ready," he said to me. "You come with me in the punt, Nikola"—that was the name I went by on these hazardous occasions—"and that'll make four with the two paddlers. And you'll have to sit in that rubber thing, Juritsa: you and Milovan." We pushed off.

I thought of my task ahead. My main work with the Partisans was now finished. Base had

"Hurry," the peasant shouted, "the Germans are just down the street." Like mice with the cat behind them, the three of us leaped into the hole

transferred me to the Hungarian section of our special branch. My orders were to cross the Danube into Hungary and see if I could penetrate or make contact with Budapest, the capital. Only a month or so back, the Germans had overthrown the Horthy Government there and set up a puppet government. Base was of the opinion that "something must be stirring." I was told to go and find out.

Something my Partisan friends had told me a day or so before gave me strong reasons for thinking that I might succeed. Kolya, the Partisan commander in the Fruska Gora, had said to me: "There's a Hungarian come from Budapest. Wants us to send him to London. He is in Novi Sad—that's the biggest town on the Hungarian side of the river. His name is Szentgyörgy, Albert Szentgyörgy. Heard of him?"

Of course I had heard of him. Szentgyörgy was Hungary's best-known scientist. His name alone was big enough to lend huge weight to the Allied cause—if we could only get him "out" and let him speak on the Hungarian service of the B.B.C. "It's tremendously important," I assured Kolya.

"I don't know," said Kolya dubiously. "This man has arrived in Novi Sad with his daughter. He made contact with our agents there, and asked for an assurance that we could fly him to London. Our chaps said there was a British officer on the other side of the river. They invited him to cross the river with his daughter. He thought it was too risky. So we think that you'd better go over to Novi Sad and see him yourself."

I was enormously excited. If I could reach Novi Sad before Professor Szentgyörgy lost heart and went back to Budapest, I might be able to persuade him to come back with me across the river. Once back, we should soon be able to arrange for him to be flown out to Southern Italy and thence to England.

More Comic Than Serious

The crossing of the Danube should have been a solemn occasion, for the enemy pillboxes would have us in range, if they spotted us, for over half an hour. But everything went a bit crazy. The craziness began with our rubber boat. It leaked from its long travels on pony-back from Bosnia, so that Juritsa and Milovan had to make constant use of the small hand bellows provided with the boat. Apart from that, it would not steer. It sawed back and forth, dragging behind and then rushing up to shoot past us, tugging on its line. Juritsa thought all this immensely funny.

Our two paddlers had to take this strange convoy a good way upstream before turning out into the swift current: otherwise we should land downstream on the doorstep of a Hungarian pillbox. After a time one of them said: "Here, we're far enough."

"No, a little farther," Black George decided, "otherwise we'll float down on to the pillbox." The paddler hissed: "Where *is* the pillbox?"

"Just there. Can't you see it? That hump in the darkness. You'll have to take us farther upstream."

Little waves chuckled under our bows. The sky now was clear about our heads; starlight shone pallidly in the waste of waters. *Hoo-phew. . . . Hoo-phew. . . .* sighed the pump. "Good thing I can swim," called Juritsa.

And that was how four Partisans, in the springtime of 1944, crossed the greatest river in Europe. The whole thing seemed so frivolous that we felt a bit hysterical. And to make matters still more ridiculous, I was caught in midstream by a cruel bout of diarrhoea, the result of recurrent dysentery there was then no means of curing. I crouched in painful cramp on the floor of the punt, trying to control myself.

On the Hungarian bank, three men were waiting for us. We climbed out, the boat grating on the bank. I collapsed. Behind me, they were lifting the boat out of the water. Black George came up to me. "Can you go on?" I got up and we started to walk over the mushy grass, carrying the rubber boat with us. In a little we were away from effective range of the pillbox and could stand for a moment's rest.

Juritsa was swearing amiably at the rubber boat. "You old cow," he said, slapping its rotundity, "you'd have sunk like a stone if we'd let you."

We were over the first hurdle alive: the problem now was to stay alive.

NEXT WEEK: A girl Partisan joins our mission. I meet Tito again at a victory parade in Belgrade

Rich and Rich, marriage of talents

by ELKAN ALLAN

He is Roy Rich, of films, stage and radio. His wife is Brenda Bruce, star actress. As Rich and Rich, Ltd., they mean business

TWO YEARS AGO a new company was registered in London with the opulent-sounding title of Rich and Rich, Ltd. Its articles of association meandered on in obscure legal phraseology about performing rights, contracts, options and licences. Translated into plain English, it meant that a talented young married couple had decided to put their combined artistic abilities on a business basis.

The chief directors of the company are Roy Rich and his wife, Brenda Bruce. Since it was formed it has prospered, for Brenda has been the star and Roy the producer of one of the theatre's recent surprise hits, a revival of Somerset Maugham's *Home and Beauty*. It was first put on at the little Arts Theatre Club, where Roy is one of the two resident directors of production, for a four-week run. But so enthusiastic were the critics and the public that it was transferred to a big West End theatre, where it ran for seven months.

"Richie" (as Brenda calls Roy) is a tall, easy-mannered thirty-nine year old, with tendencies to baldness, which he philosophically accepts, and to plumpness, which he does not. So successful has he been in fighting the habit his suits have of getting too tight for him that he has just brought his weight down from thirteen and a half stone to eleven and a half in eight weeks.

Met On A Green Line Bus

"Brucie" or "Charles," as Roy calls Brenda ("Charles because she looks like a King Charles spaniel"), is thirty, with naturally blonde hair, big grey eyes and a slightly projecting upper lip which caricaturists always exaggerate. She wears a huge and heavy amethyst bishop's ring on the third finger of her right hand, which Roy gave her as a wedding present. Her wedding present to Roy was even heavier—a first edition of Pepys's *Diary* in many volumes.

They met on a Green Line bus on the way to a garden party at Farnham. It was during the war, and Roy's compèring was interrupted by a German plane which spluttered machine-gun bullets. Everyone ran under the trees and there were no casualties, but Roy found he was feeling very protective towards the fair-haired girl singer with whom he had travelled. Four years later, in 1946, they were married.

"Because we were married in a register office, we both felt a bit bad about it," says Roy. "So after the ceremony and on the way to the reception, I asked Brenda if she would like to pop into St. Martin-in-the-Fields for a moment. The church was full and we were greeted by a man who seemed to be an usher and who asked us if we were friends of the family. As we crept up the aisle, I whispered: 'What luck, darling, we must have come in the middle of a wedding.' Then we heard the preacher intoning about someone's virtues, and saw in front of us an open coffin! We had come into the middle of a memorial service."

Venice Honeymoon Cancelled

The B.B.C. would not give him even a week off from the many series he was broadcasting. So instead of the honeymoon at Venice they had planned, they went to Brighton, and he went to London three times, to do *In Town Tonight*, *B.B.C. Dancing Club* and *Picture Parade*.

Since then, they have worked together on the making of the film *My Brother's Keeper*, several plays and, most recently, a festival of eighteen short Shaw plays. Usually they work together very well. "It never occurs to me when he is producing that Richie is my husband," says Brenda. "We don't mention the play at home, and I don't think he is either over-nice or over-nasty to me in front of the rest of the company." Roy adds: "Whenever there's an argument, she's always on the side of the company, anyway." Smiling sweetly, Brenda replies: "That's because they're always right."

This is in fun, however, for Roy is generally

JOHN BULL PHOTOGRAPH BY ARTHUR WHITTINGTON

Roy and Brenda at home. She says: "It's nice to have him directing: he makes me weep so well"

Director and star rehearse on the stage of the Arts Theatre. Usually they work together well

recognized as one of the most efficient and painstaking producers in the West End. Says a colleague: "He doesn't go in for dark stages and arty lighting, but his productions have a pace and certainty which are absolutely commanding." As a matter of course, he recently auditioned thirty-eight actresses for one small part. He spends four nights a week watching other people's plays, usually in the suburbs and provinces.

His whole life has been spent in and around the theatre. He started his career with a company owned by his father, Charlie Rich, who claimed the distinction of being the first music hall comedian to make people laugh without the aid of funny garments, red noses and wigs. It was eighteen-year-old Roy's job to see that the company was not being swindled by the local management. At one town in the north, he reported that he thought the theatre owner was pocketing some of the box office money. Roy's father checked up, and on the last night of the week a meeting was arranged in the dress circle bar.

Swindler Who Did Not Sue

"What will you have to drink?" asked the theatre owner. "A double whisky and Apollinaris," ordered Charlie Rich. When the drink came he emptied the mineral water into the whisky, drank it up, and then said in an even tone: "Sir, I estimate that you have swindled me out of £100 this week. If I am wrong you can sue me after what I am now going to do." He then picked up the empty Apollinaris bottle, brought it down smartly and hard over the theatre owner's head, said gruffly, "Come on, Roy," and left. The stunned man slumped to the ground with a crash. He did not sue.

When Roy graduated into being a manager himself, he was faced at Blackpool with the problem of advertising one of George Black's shows which had been so hurriedly put on that all the poster sites were full up. With characteristic ingenuity, he organized forty cars belonging to the company and friends into a long poster-parade. On the day of the parade, the leading car smashed into a lamp-post in the middle of the promenade, and all the other cars piled up behind. By the time the police had it sorted out, the whole of Blackpool had heard about the show. "There was a forty shilling fine to pay, but it was cheap publicity."

Meanwhile, Brenda's big chance came when the chorus girls of *1066 And All That*, of which she was the smallest, got bored with the unending success of the show and decided to put on their own play. Sir Barry Jackson, who ran the famous Birmingham Repertory Theatre, saw it and invited her to join the Rep. But there, in her first play, she almost got thrown out of the company. She was playing a schoolgirl in a comedy called *The Gentle Sex*. When she made her entrance, the knob on the door came off in her hand.

"I remembered I had been told never to let the audience know if anything went wrong, so I popped it into the satchel I was carrying, and went on as though nothing had happened. This turned out to be quite the worst thing to do, because Stewart Granger, who was playing the lead, couldn't get on to the stage! He hammered on the door, shouting, 'Let me in!' in his huge voice, and I had to pretend it was all part of the play and open the door from the inside. He was in such a temper that underneath his lines he hissed at me to go and put the knob back on the door. At first I wouldn't do so, because I was afraid that it would look too obvious to the audience. But he got so furious, I had to go in the end."

Soon after she met Roy, he joined the B.B.C. He was principally an announcer, but also made a reputation as the first British "disc-jockey" in *Record Time* and *Housewives' Choice*. He was also the quizmaster in the first full show of this type ever heard on the B.B.C. The first question he asked in *Quiz Time* was: "What do bricklayers carry their bricks in?" He approved the answer as a hod, but next day there were dozens of letters for him. They were from bricklayers, explaining that they did not carry their bricks at all—they had someone else to do it for them.

After the war, Rich became a film director and, among other things, was in charge of Glynis Johns's mermaid tail in the film *Miranda*. "Designing it was like inventing a military weapon, and the man who was responsible for the wartime frogmen's suits co-operated with a rubber factory to produce it. Trial models used to come in crates with the words 'MERMAID'S TAIL, MARK III' solemnly stencilled on the side. We got up to Mark IX before we found a satisfactory model. Even that one came off when a 'double' jumped into the water wearing it—and she had nothing on underneath. We played the gentlemen, however, exposed the film to the light, and presented it to her."

When people say to Brenda, "It must be a great help to have a husband who is a director," she gives a hollow laugh. For, when he was casting *Home and Beauty*, he sent the play to four other stars. Each sent it back. He told Brenda in despair: "I'm at the bottom of the pickle barrel." He still did not think of her as the star, and it was only after the director of the Arts Theatre, Alec Clunes, insisted on her being tried out that he telephoned home and offered it to her. "You *must* be at the bottom of the pickle barrel!" was her acid comment, but she accepted, and it established her as a star.

Brenda admits she is temperamental. "I have to cry at least once during the rehearsals of every play, and that's when it's nice to have Richie directing. He makes me weep so well. After a beastly weekend in a country cottage we had, I got up early in the cold to mess about with a fire that wouldn't light. I was feeling very fed up. At rehearsal Richie was absolutely wretched to me. I was on the verge of tears, and other members of the cast protested against his bullying, but I knew what he was doing, and kept telling them to leave him alone. In the end, I had a good cry and felt fine afterwards."

First Night Temperament

She threatened a scene on the first night of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. She was about to go on after the first interval when she discovered that her mascot, an old and gangling toy monkey called Micky, was not in his proper place on her dressing-room table. Suddenly she announced that if she didn't have Micky she could not go on the stage again. She insisted that Roy must rush back for him in the car.

He recalls: "There was chaos for five minutes, with half of the company thinking that Micky was a person and wondering why on earth he had to be found. The curtain was already overdue, and I finally had to go." Glaring at the doll, which occupies a place of honour in their living-room, he adds: "I hate him."

Their flat on the top floor of a Bloomsbury block is furnished like a stage set. The living-room has a cherry red carpet and a bright yellow suite. There is one room with black wall-paper and gold stars, which Roy intends to use only at night, for supper. Their pictures are old playbills, photographs of themselves, or modern originals. The prize is a painting by Feliks Topolski of Bernard Shaw, which Roy bought for £150 in the middle of one of their economy drives. "It's a wonderful investment, darling," he assured Brenda. "If ever we're tight for money, we can sell it." Now they say it would be the last thing they would sell.

Financial Ups And Downs

They are keen opponents of the common idea that a husband and wife should not share their money. "We are a single financial unit," says Roy. "When we got married, I earned £20 a week on the staff of the B.B.C., and Brenda was getting £10 a week in the revue *Sweet and Low*. Then I joined the R.A.F. and drew half a crown a day, while Brenda coined £75 a week as Mabel Crum in *While the Sun Shines*. Then, when I came out of the R.A.F. and started doing free-lance radio work, I was soon earning £4,000 a year, while she flopped for a while."

This year, they are both doing well, and look forward to bigger things ahead. Brenda—if she is lucky with her parts—is likely to establish herself as a character actress who can star. Roy—if he, too, has luck—will combine his stage, screen and radio work to keep up his share, richly, of Rich and Rich, Ltd. THE END

STARTING ON JUNE 16

Venetian Bird

JOHN BULL has secured exclusive serial rights of *Venetian Bird*, a brilliantly written and exciting new novel by Victor Canning—well remembered for his *Forest of Eyes* (among last year's most popular JOHN BULL serials) and the film *Golden Salamander*. Serialization—in advance of book publication—will begin in JOHN BULL on June 16.

To make sure of your JOHN BULL place a regular order with your newsagent now.

FESTIVAL AT FARBRIDGE

Laura engaged! Theodore couldn't believe his ears. He wanted to get away quickly—but the Festival had to go on

by J. B. PRIESTLEY

"No!" cried Laura, jumping up. But her voice was not heard. The announcement had been made

People in the story . . .

LAURA CASEY: assistant to Commodore Tribe; in love with Theodore, and now, since their tiff, missing him badly.

THEODORE JENKS: the Commodore's chief assistant until, after the tiff with Laura, he left Farbridge; is now back there with a theatre company.

COMMODORE TRIBE: official organizer of the Festival. Worried about Laura, and knowing she is fond of Michael Seacombe, he urges Seacombe to rush her into an engagement.

MICHAEL SEACOMBE: a journalist handling publicity for the Festival; in love with Laura, but dubious about the Commodore's idea, fearing Laura feels more strongly for Theodore.

GRACE "ROBINSON": a likeable, attractive, but mysterious little woman the Commodore would like to settle down with . . . if only she'd stop disappearing.

THE FESTIVAL HAD BEGUN. The banqueting room on the ground floor of the Town Hall, Farbridge, did not look very festive, and indeed suggested a disused swimming-bath; but the long table down one side and the short table at each end were almost bright with guests and flowers, food and drink.

The Mayor himself, wearing his chain, was seated in the centre of the long table, and making a most convivial *Pzzzz*. Waitresses were serving tomato soup, roast chicken, mashed potatoes and cauliflower, and ices. There was red wine; there was white wine; there was beer. And a lively buzz of talk ascended to the balcony (open to the general public), where Theodore, who had been sent to keep an eye on Patrick Gorebarry, leading actor of the Festival theatre company, was staring down hungrily not at the roast chicken but at Laura Casey, sitting between the Commodore and the detestable, smiling Michael Seacombe. For Gorebarry, wedged between Lady Barth, a rich, bad-tempered old barmpot, and Mrs. Bulfoss, Theodore hardly had a glance to spare. It was Laura he stared at, a Laura who did not even know he was up there, remotely devouring her with more zest than she could find for the chicken.

When the lunch began, Gorebarry had had a brief, difficult session with Lady Barth. "Well, what do *you* want here?" she screamed at him.

Pitching his voice admirably, he replied: "I've come to arrange the fireworks." At which Mrs. Bulfoss, on his other side, began giggling.

"Did you say fireworks? You don't look that sort of man," said Lady Barth, rather annoyed. "Though I must admit you can't tell who anybody is nowadays."

"I was a ballet dancer before I came into the firework business," said Gorebarry blandly. "But one night I jumped clean into the orchestra pit and badly injured two trombone players——"

"Two what?" she shrieked at him. "I don't know what you're talking about. Wretched bit of fowl they've given me—like indiarubber. Kindly pass the wine. If I can't eat, I'll drink. What about you?"

"Allow me," he said, filling her glass.

"Thank you. But I don't like to see a man

not drinking anything." And she turned to her other neighbour, who was Rufus Grope, the poet.

"Poor man!" said Mrs. Bulfoss, smiling. She felt she was looking very attractive, and that actually life was marvellous. "Now don't start telling me ridiculous things about yourself, Mr. Gorebarry, because I know who you are. I've admired you for years, and I'm terribly excited about the play tonight."

"How nice of you!" he murmured, regarding her with a melancholy approval. "Let me fill your glass. What's it like, this stuff?"

"I never know about wines," she confessed prettily. "But it seems rather strong. Have you got a good company?"

"My dear, I wouldn't know. Difficult to say, really. Are there to be speeches here?"

"Oh, sure to be."

"Yes, of course, sure to be. My God! Either I must leave early or have a drink."

"I know exactly how you feel," she told him. "My husband's the Member of Parliament here, and I've had to listen to hours and hours of speeches, until sometimes I wanted to scream."

"You ought to have screamed. Perhaps we might scream together. But no wonder I detected in those pretty eyes of yours, my dear lady, a hint, a touch, a remote suggestion, of suffering."

"You didn't?" She was delighted.

"Very well, I didn't then," he replied moodily, offering her his tragic profile.

"There!" she cried recklessly. She had filled his glass.

He looked at it, fingering the stem irresolutely, a huge, dark question in his eyes. She could feel herself melting under that look. What a terribly exciting man!

"You think I ought to drink this?" he asked.

"Well, why not?"

"Only sensible thing I've heard today. Blessings!" He drained the glass in one gulp. "I've tasted worse, though if that's claret, then I'm Edmund Kean." He filled his glass, then smiled at her. "What do I call you?"

"I'm Mrs. Bulfoss——"

"Nonsense! I can't call you Mrs. Bulfoss. I wouldn't call anybody Mrs. Bulfoss."

"Madge then."

"That's better. Madge, I drink to that absurd, inadequate nose, those limpid blue eyes."

"What are you saying?" cried Lady Barth, who had now had quite enough of Mr. Grope.

GOREBARRY emptied his glass first, then stared balefully at Lady Barth. "I was saying that before I was in the ballet I was a traveller in wholesale confectionery——"

"You were saying nothing of the kind," said Lady Barth sharply. "But I see that you're drinking now."

"I'm drinking," he declared emphatically. "And so is she—Madge—and so are you." He began to fill all three glasses, found the bottle inadequate, and called imperiously for another.

"I don't think I want any more," said Mrs. Bulfoss, beginning to wonder if she had been wise in encouraging him to drink.

"My dear Madge, of course you do. And very shortly I shall demand some brandy."

"There probably isn't any."

"Then we'll send for some, Madge. In the meantime, kindly ask your neighbour to make a long arm for the bottle of white wine along there. It can't be worse than the red."

All this glass-filling and bottle-passing went unnoticed by Theodore, who was still staring at Laura. He was feeling miserable. After returning very late from the theatre, he had slept badly; he felt out of it up there in the balcony; and he had had no lunch. Another man came in and sat down in front of Theodore, who merely gave him a quick glance and then resumed his sad staring.

The coffee had arrived below; the Loyal Toast was drunk, and tobacco smoke drifted above the tables; and now the Mayor addressed the company. He was very glad that it had fallen—*Pzzzz*—to his lot to preside at a gathering—*Pzzzz*—of this kind, which was unique—*Pzzzz*—in the history of their town, which—*Pzzzz*—had never before had a Festival. And on he went, for the next ten minutes, *Pzzzz*-ing and *which*-ing, glazing all eyes.

The Commodore had been asked to reply for the Festival organizers, and was genial and easy. He told them how hard his assistants had worked, and then singled out for special praise his chief assistant, Miss Laura Casey. "And now I've a pleasant announcement to make," he continued. "For even though Miss Casey and our director of publicity, Mr. Michael Seacombe, have been working so hard for us, the old romantic spirit has not been idle, nor neglected. And so I know you will all be delighted to learn that Miss Casey and Mr. Seacombe have given me permission to announce their engagement."

"No," cried Miss Casey, jumping up, but her cry was lost in the applause. Then things began

"It wouldn't hurt you to nick yourself just a little for her"

happening in the balcony. The large young man sitting precariously on the second row of chairs had pitched forward on the first row, making a terrific clatter. As he tried to disentangle himself, he was helped by the short, elderly man who had come in late and had sat almost in front of him. And this man, taking a good look at the embarrassed Theodore, had tapped him smartly on the shoulder, saying: "Look here, young man, I want a word with you."

There was about this abrupt and rather masterful elderly man, to Theodore's confused mind, shocked by the announcement of Laura's engagement, and remembering the suspicion he had aroused in retrieving Grace's box, a definite suggestion of Scotland Yard and detectives and sudden arrest. So he pushed the man away, jumped up the two tiers like a colossal, mad frog, sending chairs clattering down, and dashed out into the first-floor corridor, without noticing that nobody was following him.

WHILE Theodore was hurrying out of the Town Hall, the short, elderly man was leaning over the balcony rail, waving to Laura, who had left her seat at the table. Then, as she came nearer, she recognized him, and cried: "Dad! Dad!"

In the general confusion, for the Commodore's announcement and the commotion that followed it had broken up the lunch party, Mrs. Bulfoss and Patrick Gorebarry, who had not moved from their places, were still engaged in intimate talk.

"My dear Madge," Gorebarry was saying, "if you have some brandy out at this house of yours, then it's all quite simple: we go there, drink it, and continue without a break to build up, to consolidate, to crown, our beautiful friendship. Will your husband be there?"

"No, he won't. But oughtn't you to rest or rehearse?"

"Certainly not," he said decidedly, in a tone that would have terrified Archie Mossat, the producer. "Come along now. Let's get out while we've a chance." And he pulled her up after him.

"Pat," cried Philippa Hookwood, his leading actress, in some alarm. "Pat. Just a minute." But she was too late.

"Anything wrong?" asked the Commodore.

"There might be," she said darkly. "Pat Gorebarry's gone off with that woman. And I've an idea, from his general behaviour, that he's started drinking again. Somebody'll have to go after him."

By this time, Laura had met her father at the bottom of the stairs from the balcony, and was telling him tearfully how worried she had been about him.

"Got home quicker that I thought I would," he told her. "Then came straight here. But what about these young men, Laura? Surely the fellow you described so enthusiastically in your letters was the fellow up there in the balcony, who went off like a shot when I spoke to him? What's the matter with him? What's happened?"

"I don't know," she wailed. "It's all got into a terrible mess. Oh!"

"Now, now, now. Come along. Let's get out of this."

THEODORE had made for his hotel, the Albion, after first making reasonably sure that the short, elderly man was not following him. It was only about half-past two, and now, recovering from his shocks, he felt very hungry indeed. There was no hope of a proper lunch at this time, but the Albion had a snack bar where there might still be something left. The only people standing at the counter of the snack bar were Archie Mossat, the producer, and George, the stage manager of the theatre company, who were eating pork pie and potato salad in a vague exhausted manner. There was nothing left for Theodore but brawn sandwiches.

The other two broke off their unending technical talk to stare at him. "Ye look peculiar to me, ma laddie," said Mossat.

"Anything wrong?" asked George. He and Theodore were on excellent terms.

"Yes, George, all kinds of things," Theodore muttered through his sandwich, which was very dry and had a peppery flavour.

"Was Pat Gorebarry there?" said Mossat. "And did he have any drinks?"

"I'm afraid he must have done."

"Ma Gord!" cried Mossat, putting down his pork pie and turning into a mask of horror. "If he's started, he'll never stop. Why did ye let him start, Theodore?"

"How could I stop him?" asked Theodore, indignantly.

"But what happened? Where's he now?"

"I don't know."

"But it's your business to know."

"Well, wherever he is," said Theodore firmly, "I'm staying here to finish these sandwiches. What happened there, what with one thing and another, was no fun for me, let me tell you."

"George, we'll awa' to the theatre, an' maybe do some phoning from there," said Mossat.

Left to himself, Theodore remained at the counter, mournfully chewing his sandwiches. The place was deserted now except for the woman behind the counter, who was busy clearing up, and a man sitting not far away, with his face hidden behind a newspaper. Theodore gave him one look and then abandoned himself to mastication and gloomy reverie. He was sorry now he had come back to Farbridge. He would leave at once if it were not for the fact that he couldn't possibly let down Mossat and the company. Or so he told himself.

Then he saw that the man sitting down was no longer hiding his face behind a newspaper. The last time he had seen that face he had been taking a bath in Grace's flat. Yes, it was the private detective, A. Smith of London, who had been shadowing Grace, the Commodore's friend, for some weeks. Theodore stared at him angrily.

"Now, now," said A. Smith, coming

IN A CLASS BY ITSELF · IN A GLASS BY ITSELF
—or with a kindred spirit

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across, "don't look like that. Mr. Jenks, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Theodore, rather sulkily.

Smith winked. "Trust me to get the info. Every time, chum. But you're staying here, and she's gone to the White Hart again. Right?"

Theodore decided to keep his temper. "Would you like a drink?"

"Can a duck swim? Ta, muchly. Pint of bitter."

"Now look," said Theodore, after Smith had dipped his long nose into the pint glass, "you're making a mistake. I don't blame you, but the fact remains that I'd never been in that flat before the night you found me in the bath, and I've never been there since. There's absolutely nothing between us. I hardly know her. And that's the truth."

"I believe you, though thousands wouldn't." Smith winked again. "Give you a bit of info, Mr. Jenks. A nice woman that, I dare say, but a terrible liar."

"Well," said Theodore reflectively, "she may be. But I hardly know her, and there's absolutely nothing between us. Do get that into your head."

"O.K." said Smith. "Be seeing you, Mr. Jenks. And ta for the drink." He sauntered out.

LATER in the afternoon, at the White Hart, the Commodore was taking tea with Grace, whose appearance there had been a wonderful surprise.

Philippa Hookwood, the actress, and Mrs. Hungerford, a friend of Archie Mossat, had joined up with them. Philippa was still worrying about Patrick Gorebarry, and nothing that the others could say would reassure her.

"You don't know him," she told them darkly. "And you haven't to play opposite to him tonight, and I have. I ought to be resting now—I'll have to go up soon—but what's the use when I'm wondering all the time what's happening to that idiot?"

"My dear, I'm certain it'll be all right," cried Mrs. Hungerford. "Won't it, Commodore? He couldn't possibly let us down now."

"Oh—couldn't he?" said Philippa.

"No, not when it's all so——" Mrs. Hungerford was all breathless enthusiasm again. "I mean, as soon as I arrived this afternoon, I felt the whole thing was just—— Such a genuinely festival atmosphere, I felt at once. Didn't you?" She appealed to Grace, who replied promptly that she did.

"And as soon as I met Commodore Tribe," Mrs. Hungerford continued, "and of course I'd heard our dear Theodore talk about him, I knew that the whole scheme was absolutely—oh!—just—you know."

"Thank you, Mrs. Hungerford," said the Commodore, with a twinkle. Then he looked grave, and lowered his voice. "But I'll let you into one little secret, ladies. If this Festival isn't a wild success, there'll be hell to pay here in Farbridge. We've overspent. The Borough Treasurer's walked out on us. And unless the public packs us out — theatre, pageant, concerts, park dancing, everything—we're broke, ruined, and some of us may have to run for it, leaving by the back door at two in the morning. No, I mean that. I've taken a huge gamble." He looked at Grace, who smiled at him encouragingly.

Theodore came in.

"He doesn't look very happy, does he?" said Grace, waving to him. Philippa waved too, and he came hurrying up to them. "Is Gorebarry here?"

"No," said Philippa in dismay. "I thought you'd know about him."

"I do know about him," said Theodore grimly, dropping into a chair. "He was at the Bulfoss house, for a while, drinking far too much brandy. Then we took him to Rufus Grope's lecture. But now we've lost him completely."

"And that," said Philippa tragically, "just about tears it."

"We could organize a search," said the Commodore.

"I'm rather good at looking for people," said Grace cheerfully.

Theodore, remembering the box episode, gave her rather a sour look. "Some of them are good at looking for you, too. I met that shabby little detective chap again. Yes, he's here."

"A. Smith of London, do you mean?" cried the Commodore.

"Yes," said Theodore sulkily, "and there's another chap about who seems to be chasing me around." He looked accusingly at Grace, who coloured and then, meeting the inquiring stare of the Commodore, looked more embarrassed still, in fact quite guilty.

"Theodore," Philippa said, "you'll have to find Pat."

"I know," he replied wearily. "I know. I sent Mrs. Bulfoss home to see if he'd gone back there. You say he's not here. The pubs aren't open yet, so he can't be drinking anywhere."

"Oh—can't he? Once he starts, he can be drinking at any time."

"In London perhaps," said the Commodore. "But not here. I wouldn't know where to find a drink at this hour, and I know Farbridge better than he does. He must be wandering about, or back in the theatre, or in some tea-shop."

"Or buying a motor bike or chasing a girl in the park," said Philippa bitterly, "or giving a false name at a police station." But then she jumped up and waved frantically across the lounge, which was rapidly filling. "Thank goodness! There's father and Trevy. And Trevy'll have his car."

MR. HOOKWOOD and Group Captain Trevone, two of Theodore's first friends in England, had motored up from Brant-in-the-Hollow, where, in energetic partnership, they ran a light industrial plant.

"Darling Trevy," Philippa cried, a minute later, after kissing her father, "I'm so glad you're here."

Group Captain Trevone looked at her. "Oh you are, are you?" he said, obviously steeling himself against these blandishments. "Well, I've heard that before, Phil. Too many times."

"Darling, don't be silly. You can tell me about that afterwards. But you've just got to help Theodore and me." And she explained about Gorebarry, with some help from Theodore, and finally the Group Captain agreed to take Theodore in his car to search the town.

"What's the matter with Trevy?" she asked her father, as they stood watching the Group Captain and Theodore hurry out.

"You'll see, my dear," said Mr. Hookwood dryly. "Ought to be resting now, oughtn't you?"

"Yes, come up with me a minute." She turned to the Commodore and Grace. "I'll see you tonight—and pray for us."

"Quite a commotion," said Grace cheerfully, when she and the Commodore had the corner to themselves. "I'm going to enjoy this. I

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"Not yet; I was just getting ready to break it to him gently, when you called"

like plenty happening, don't you?"

"I used to think so," he told her. "But now I'm not quite so sure."

"Go on, you love it. I can tell. Wouldn't like you if you didn't."

"Oh! So you like me, do you?"

"Wouldn't be here if I didn't. You ought to know that."

The Commodore lit his pipe and looked hard into her open, pleasant face. No eyes could have been more innocent and candid than hers.

"Now, Grace," he said, in a rather masterful manner, "you're here again, and I'm delighted. You say you like me, and again I'm delighted —proud, too. But twice you've run out on me, without a word of explanation. I don't think it's good enough, you know."

"No, I know it isn't." She was troubled, and avoided his look.

"Even young Jenks seems to know more than I do," he went on. "I could see that when he began talking about that detective. I think it's about time you told me something. Don't you?" he asked gently.

"I meant to tell you," she said hurriedly. "But not here, not now. You've lots to do, including finding me a seat for the theatre—remember? And we're having dinner early, and I must have a bath and put some nice clothes on." She put her hand on his. "When it's all over tonight, if we can find a quiet corner, then I'll explain everything. I promise. And no more running away—honestly."

So he let her go, and then he strolled along to the Festival Centre, where he found Michael Seacombe and little Captain Mobbs, ex-Conservative agent and now social organizer of the Festival, in the back room.

"Any news?" said Mobbs.

"What's happened to our leading actor now?" asked Michael.

"Theodore and Group Captain Trevone," said the Commodore, "are out combing the town for him."

"Even if they find him," said Michael, "he'll probably be reeling all over the stage tonight as Cardinal Who's-it. And I've just had a pair of dramatic critics in here who've come specially from town—they're friends of the author, Derek Boon, and they'll write us up, if we give 'em a chance. Damn Gorebarry—and also that fool of a Bulfoss woman, who apparently started him off on this binge."

"I want another seat for tonight," said the Commodore, "for my friend Mrs. Robinson, who, incidentally, has money and promised to help if necessary. And if we're unlucky, some of us may need a little ready cash to make a getaway before this Festival's over."

"You don't surprise me," said Michael, who appeared to be in a sombre mood.

The Commodore looked at him. "Where's Laura?" he asked.

"Rushed out in a fury," said Michael. "Blames poor Jenks for being rude to her father. But Father, who seems a very sensible chap, thinks Jenks mistakes him for somebody else."

"Well, I must go," said the Commodore. "We're eating early, and I propose to put on a dinner jacket. You too, I hope."

"You know, if you were a younger and less likeable fellow," Michael said slowly, "I'd be inclined to give you a poke on the snout for making that lunch announcement of my engagement to Laura. I've not had one civil word or look from my dear fiancée since."

"But she's on her mettle, isn't she?" said the Commodore. "Active, lively, full of go and fight? That's the great thing. Until we're through with this Festival."

"Oh — blast the Festival!" shouted Michael in sudden and quite genuine rage. "Go away, and leave me in peace and misery."

FOR the first time for many years there was a crowd outside the Farbridge Palace Theatre on a Monday night. The playgoers themselves, of course, made up quite a crowd, but they were surrounded by genuine lookers-on who, with the sure instinct of their kind, knew at once that this was an occasion. Here at last was an audience that had its own audience. Already the Festival spirit was quickening Farbridge.

There was indeed much to see, to wonder at, to admire.

There were Alderman and Mrs. Walmer, in full mayoral splendour, symbolic figures of Farbridge citizenship. Commodore Horace Tribe, in an immense dinner jacket with something outlandish about its cut, looked very imposing indeed; and the lady with him, in silver and blue, demurely feminine, very sweet. Perhaps Captain Mobbs's evening clothes were rather too small for him, and his soft shirt was badly rumpled; and perhaps the fine figure of a woman, Maggie, by his side, might have been more artfully and less showily dressed (the large flowered pattern over-emphasizing her curves): but the general effect was not bad. Old Jordan wore a tail coat with a black waistcoat and a very narrow black tie, and somehow this was all in character. Mrs. Coote's emerald dress was not new and perhaps a mistake, but she looked happy and healthy.

Major Bulfoss looked correct, pink and sulky; and Mrs. Bulfoss pretty and excited in turquoise, with

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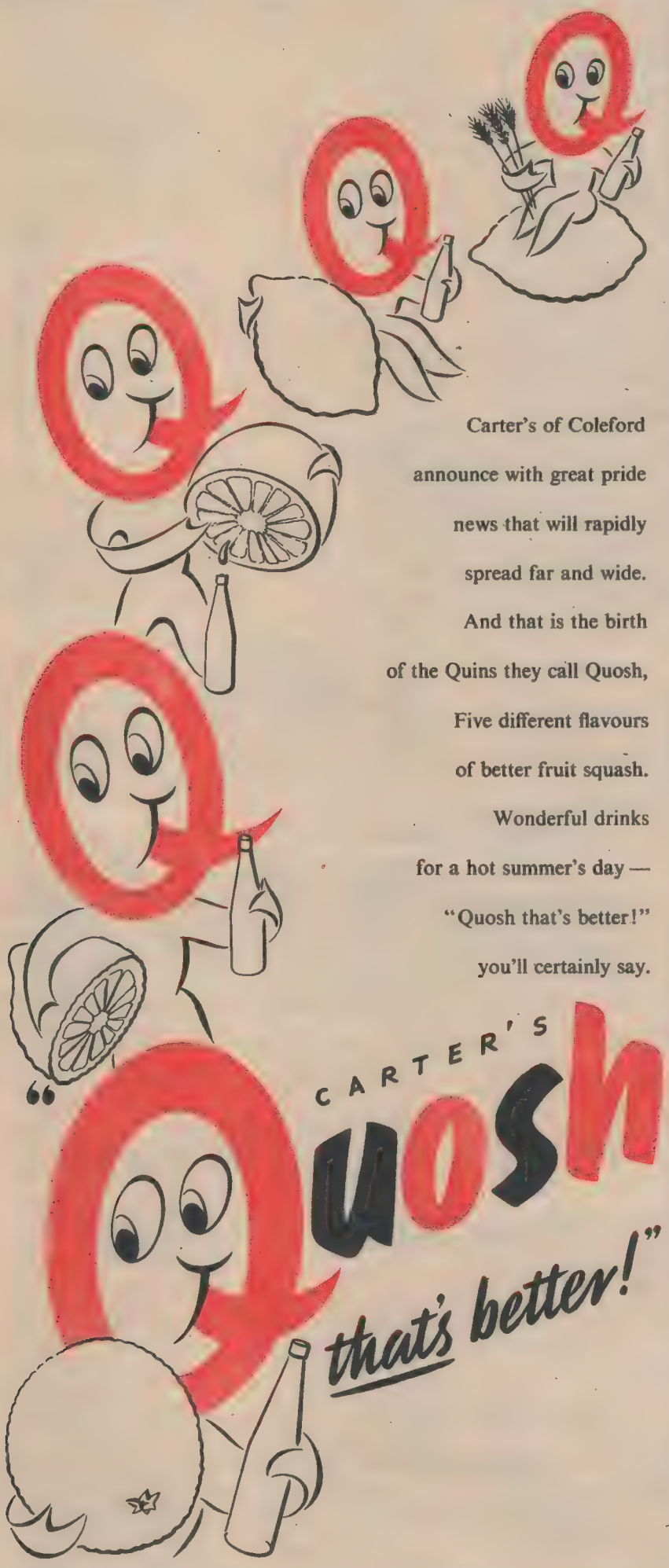

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tiny silver slippers out of a fairy tale. Three hobbledehoys, under American influence, whistled at the sight of her, as they did too when Miss Laura Casey appeared, in cherry red, accompanied by her father, who was still wearing his tweeds, but looked trim, brown, rather distinguished, a confident little man from far places.

Huntley, the Chief Education Officer, whose dress tie was unfastening itself, brought a headmistress who was all amber beads and Paisley shawl. Michael Seacombe brought nobody, had not changed, looked sulky and rather like a journalist hero of an American film.

Up in the foyer, which was brightly lit and gay with flowers, the old manager, Mr. Fotheringay, was in full evening dress, with hair and moustache dyed a richer blue-black, and fantastically pink above the cheekbones. He looked ready to tie any heroine to a railway line at a moment's notice.

There was, of course, the usual confusion about tickets that there is on all these special occasions; and Mr. Fotheringay, although appealed to, badgered, even abused, was enjoying it all. "Always happens on these big evenings," he said proudly. "Just like old times." And he rubbed his hands and chuckled away.

But there was no hand rubbing and chuckling backstage. For it was now twenty-five minutes past seven, and Patrick Gorebarry was still missing. Theodore, who was still out with the Group Captain, had returned to the theatre twice and telephoned since to report their failure. Archie Mossat was pacing up and down in the wings, cursing and moaning and clutching his gingerish curls. Philippa, who had been called down for consultation, while the rest of the company were told sharply to stay in their dressing-rooms, was there too, looking like a beautiful medieval princess about to explode.

"Ma Gord!" cried Mossat, stopping, "look at the time. What are we to do, Phil?"

"You'll have to play it, that's all, Archie," she said in despair. "You must know most of the lines and the moves."

"Ah doubt it, Ah doubt it," he moaned. "Ah've been so busy wi' *Twelfth Night* and *The Rivals*, not only producing but learning Malvolio an' Sir Anthony again. An' Ah'm a comic character actor, not a romantic leading man. Nobody wants to see me as Cardinal anybody. We can't go up, that's all."

"They might want to see me even if they don't want to see you," Philippa said rather sharply. "And in any case, we can't let these people down. We were mad to engage Pat Gorebarry. And both Clare and I warned you. You can't say we didn't."

"Ay, ay, ay, but there's no use recriminating. Does no good."

"It does me good," said Philippa. "I've got to do something besides sitting here waiting for a drunk leading man. God!—I could kill him."

"Ay, ay, but what are we to do before we kill him?"

And then they saw Theodore, who cried: "We found him. He's here."

They hurried round to Gorebarry's dressing-room, which was the star dressing-room, on the stage level, on the O.P. side. He had flopped down in a chair, white-faced, hot-eyed; and his dresser, a foolish old man, was vainly trying to remove his collar. He was very drunk, but he could talk after a fashion.

"He can't possibly go on," cried Philippa, angry and disgusted.

"I don't think he can," said Theodore, standing in the doorway. "We found him in a little pub, the other side of Peter Place."

"Ah wonder," said Mossat, "Ah wonder."

"Go on?" cried Gorebarry, sitting up and glaring at them. "Wha' hell you mean? Cer'n'ly go on. Li'l late, tha's all. Didn't know time. Ready give won'ful p'form'ce Car'nal Who's-it—won'ful p'form'ce."

"Look at him. My godfathers!" And Philippa burst into tears.

Gorebarry swayed forward and looked as if he were about to pass out.

"Gangway!" cried a loud, cheerful voice outside.

"Trevy," cried Philippa, filling the two syllables with wonder, hope and joy.

"Leave this to me, chaps," said the Group Captain, who had a jug of coffee in one hand and a fizzing glass in the other. "I'll fix it. Done it before. Just give me quarter of an hour with him. Make a speech or something to amuse 'em."

Gorebarry pointed to him waveringly but solemnly. "Now here's a man. An' they're gettin' bloody uncommon."

"I think he's right too," said Philippa, as she and Mossat and Theodore walked away. "And I believe Trevy'll do it—the angel. I must do my face again."

"Theodore," said Mossat excitedly, "nip round fast to the front, lad, and ask the Commodore or one of 'em to come back here and mak' some kind o' little speech, welcoming the company, anything, to pass a few minutes. Off ye go."

So just as the audience were becoming restless, the commanding but genial figure of the Commodore appeared between the dusty rose curtains. He lifted a hand, and there was quiet. "Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen," he cried in his warmest tones, "before the curtain rises, I am sure you would like me, on your behalf, to welcome to Farbridge this special Festival Repertory Company that Mr. Mossat has brought from London." There was a heartening round of applause from all parts of the house. There was more applause as he went on to talk about the programme for the rest of the week. And they clapped again when he bowed, smiled and retired.

Just behind the back-cloth, Mossat

THE HUMAN MACHINE

Fair shares

"WE'RE now a nation of spivs—by Act of Parliament!" said my friend. I knew what he meant. Too many of us today are trying to get something for nothing.

It can't be done. Everything has to be paid for. If you do less work than you ought, then someone has to do more to make up for it.

We hear a lot about "fair shares"—but it always refers to the receiving end. It would be better if we thought more about fair shares in *giving.*

by ROFFE THOMPSON

dashed up to him. "Commodore, that was fine, an' juist what was needed. Passed a bit o' time an' warmed them up nicely. George, cue the orchestra, and tell everybody to stand by. Ma Gord, what a life!"

Theodore came from the other side, carrying a bound script. "How's the leading man now?"

"The Group Captain's pouring coffee into him while his dresser's putting his clothes on. It'll be a peculiar performance at the best, but then it's a rum play and a fantastic part, so perhaps nobody'll know the difference. I have to follow him round, as far as I can, at the back of the set, and keep prompting him."

"A lovely evening," said Philippa, joining them at that moment. "What a time I'm going to have!"

"I'll go back," said the Commodore. "I don't want to miss any of this."

"You brute!" cried Philippa to his retreating back. Then she looked earnestly at Theodore. "You must have been with Trevy for about an hour and a half at least, looking for Pat?"

"Yes, I was. We went all over the place. Mostly in and out of pubs after six o'clock."

She hesitated. "Trevy seems to be in a rather queer mood these days. Did he—say anything about me?"

"Well, not exactly."

"Oh!" She sounded disappointed. "Well, I suppose I ought to be thinking about doing a little acting. There's the opening music."

"There's still a minute." And Theodore put a hand on her arm so that she turned to face him. His tone was urgent, though quiet. "He's not the kind of chap to say much about a girl he's seriously in love with. But I gathered he's feeling rather desperate, that he can't go on allowing you to have him on a string——"

"But I don't——" she began.

"Listen, please, Philippa. Because of something that's happened to me, I talked to him. And I told him not to make the mistake I did, but to grab hold of you and tell you what he felt about you and no nonsense——"

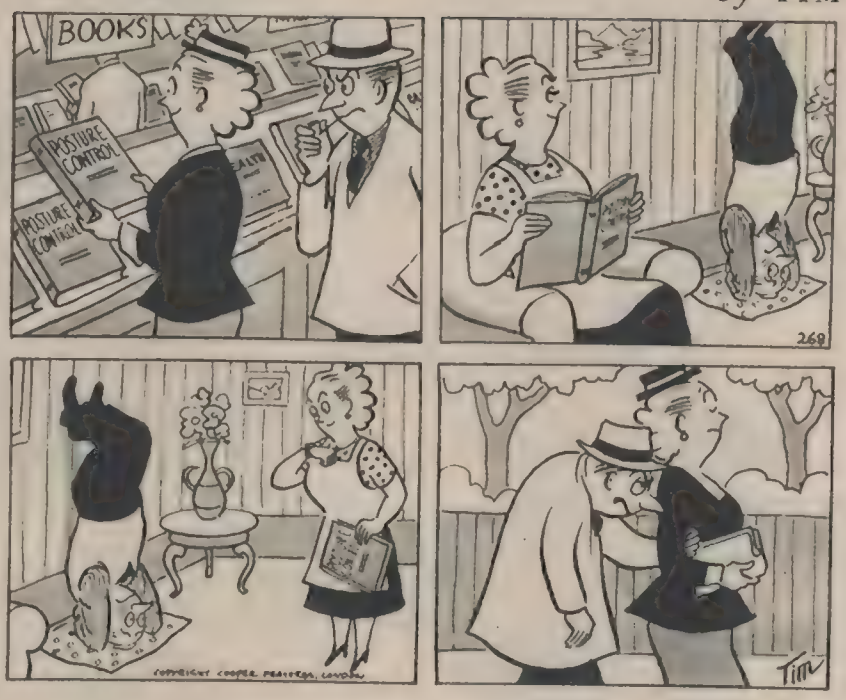
"You didn't!"

"Stand by," said George. "Curtain going up."

SITTING with her father in the front row of the dress circle, Laura watched the curtains parting and rising, and felt a mixed sense of relief and eager expectation. She wanted to sit there, with her father so close and safe, and yet be in Avignon or anywhere else that wasn't Farbridge, to lose herself and all her sad muddle among cardinals and princesses and serving maids and pages. She wanted to laugh and cry over other people's lives, not her own. The theatre might have been invented specially for her that very night.

Nevertheless, the play began badly for her. She recognized the maid who came swooping into the garden as Clare Chesbey, the girl Theodore knew, and now probably knew only too well. And she could not think of any reason why a young man who was horribly thick with this Clare, quite ravishing and with a lovely low voice, should ever bother his head about Laura Casey, even a Laura Casey who had shown herself to be completely devoted to him, let alone a Laura who had been bad-tempered and silly. Feeling very small and miserable, she stared

OH, JOHNNY! *by TIM*



at this peculiar garden in Avignon and began to wish she had stayed at home.

Then the Princess and the Cardinal entered, and it was much better. Miss Hookwood was even more opulent and ravishing than the Chesbey girl, but Laura, out of a true intuition, refused to associate her with Theodore.

And then Patrick Gorebarry proceeded at once to give an odd but very exciting performance as the Cardinal. He roamed about in a strange but fascinating way, as if he had discovered some new and more flexible style of acting. Sometimes he hesitated or muttered words or phrases that could not be properly heard; and at other times his magnificent voice rang out like a trumpet or went curving down into melancholy and defeat like a muted violin, so that as she listened she would feel her eyes hot with tears. What a wonderful thing such acting was! He made the others, even Philippa Hookwood, seem only half alive. Some of his speeches, like most of theirs, were often rather vague and faintly silly, but now and then, when he was most vivid and challenging, he would bring out passages of great beauty, which Laura could not help feeling she had heard somewhere before.

"He's a good actor," said her father, during the interval. "But shall I tell you a secret? So far you've not only heard part of a play by—who is it?—Derek Boon, but you've also heard bits and pieces—and very good too—from *Hamlet, Henry the Fourth, Richard the Second, Richard the Third, Macbeth* and *Othello*. And with any luck, in this next act, we ought to have some quotations from *Much Ado, Midsummer Night's Dream, Antony and Cleopatra, Lear* and *The Tempest*, all great favourites of mine." And then, in his engaging boyish way, he suddenly roared with laughter, and she had to laugh too.

An hour later the curtain came down, hiding a noble ruin of a Cardinal who had added to Boon some delicious scraps from *Troilus and Cressida, Macbeth, Antony and Cleopatra, Lear* and *The Tempest*, to a rattling storm of applause. The full company took five curtains, after which Miss Hookwood and Mr. Gorebarry took three, and then the others returned, bringing with them Archie Mossat, who briefly expressed his thanks to the audience. But they would not leave until Gorebarry had made a speech.

"Ladies and Gentlemen," he intoned grandly, "I can only join our gifted producer in thanking you most warmly for your generosity towards us here tonight. Already, here in—er—Farchester—Farbridge—we feel we are among friends. Already, your charming Lyceum—Grand—Palace Theatre seems like home to us. Please remember that we are with you for—er—some time—playing — er — Shakespeare and — er—Goldsmith, I beg his pardon, Sheridan as well as Mr.—er Boom. And what a chance for you! What happiness for us! Thank you—thank you—on behalf of us all."

Five minutes later, after a rather savage exchange with Miss Hookwood, who could no longer control her feelings, Gorebarry was having a crowded reception in his dressing-room, where he insisted upon holding the hand of Mrs. Bulfoss, greatly to the astonishment of Major Bulfoss, who kept muttering something about "a jolly good show."

THEODORE was hanging about in the corridor from the stage door, hoping that Laura might come round.

"She's gone home with her father and the Saxons," said Michael Seacombe, without being asked by Theodore where she was. "Where do I find Clare Chesbey? I thought I might get a little story out of her, and I know her brother, Lionel. You don't mind if I talk to her, do you, Jenks?" There was a touch of insolence in his tone.

Theodore glowered at him. "Why should I? And don't talk to me like that, Seacombe, or I might lose my temper."

"And then what?"

"You'll be sorry." said Theodore.

Up in the manager's room, everybody had gone except Maggie and Mobbs, Grace and the Commodore, who was serious and judicial.

"Did I tell you that Seth phoned from the park?" he said to Mobbs. "Very poor attendance there, though of course it's Monday. If we're unlucky, we might drop a packet up there. Very much between ourselves, my dear Archie," he continued, looking more solemn than ever, "if we don't have rather a lot of good luck, we may find ourselves in a very nasty hole by the end of the week."

To be continued next week

A GIRL LIKE MARION

Continued from page 10

a chance to judge her handiness with sheep. They were due to gather for the first compulsory dipping. On a morning of high grey sky and fair promise, they clambered up the rake at the back of the farm buildings, he and Harry and Marion, and their dogs. They were going to gather the sheep on the Burnmoor side of the dale.

They reached the edge of the moor, and began the usual manoeuvre, peculiar to these fells. One gatherer, with his dog, takes the left flank and climbs to a high distant ridge. A second chooses the centre, keeping mainly to the lower ground. The third covers some ridge well on the right flank, nearly overlooking the dale: Leece allotted this to his daughter.

On the eastern fringe of the Fold End gathering grounds rises the severe pitch of Cat Crags, topping the dale. A beck plunges precipitously down through the centre of them, and the whole place is dangerous for gathering sheep unless they are allowed to pick their own unhurried way across the worst part, where the rock-face drops at an angle of over forty degrees. Knowing that presently Marion would be drawing level with the crags, her father moved across to watch and give advice.

ON the near side, Marion's dog, Nell, picked up a round score of ewes and their lambs. Nell's job was to steer them across the rock-face and bring them over to the other side, where a sheep-trod twined through a spongy level of mosses and cotton grass. Marion stood on a knob of rock below, calling instructions to the dog. Moving at a jog-trot, Nell began to rustle them forward.

Leece called down to his daughter: "Best tell dog tae bide. 'Tis safer for yon sheep tae find own way there."

She stared up with flaring eyes. "Who's doing this job? Wait till I make a mistake before you criticize!"

No doubt it was undaughterly, a touchy spitfire burst of temper. Understanding what lay behind it, he merely grinned in a good-humoured fashion and said no more.

He had another example of her fiery temper early that evening. Dick Branthwaite of Birkholme was driving some heifers down the dale road. One of them seemed to be giving a spot of trouble. He swished his stick against its ribs. Perhaps the blow was a shade severe. Marion, emerging from the gate in the home field, let out a cry of protest, and boxed the young man's ears with such force, he nearly lost his balance.

"If I catch you doing that again," she said in a smouldering voice, "you'll never forget it."

Fists clenched, he glared at her. She glared back at him in her young strength, her face a thundercloud. Whatever he intended doing or saying, he was persuaded by her expression to think better of it. He went on without a word.

That was one side of her nature. The other was her maternal attitude towards all young animals. The following spring, at lambing time, she positively mystified her father by her look of shining gentleness. One new-born, a Swaledale ram lamb, she chose as a pet, bringing it up on the bottle after it had lost its mother. She christened it Jinks, and in no time it became a spoiled, amusing little creature that walked about the house and treated the dogs

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as dirt. By August, it was nearly twice the size of the average lamb of its age, and its silky white fleece was changing to a coarser off-white. The short, darkish horns were pronounced. The eyes were the colour of sloes, with a greenish-amber glint, and it feared nothing. On the contrary, it had the habit of butting anybody and anything it disliked. When it deliberately knocked over the child of a woman visitor staying at a nearby farm, Leece tried to put his foot down.

"We'll have to be gitten rid o' yon, Marion."

"Get rid of Jinks? Are you mad?" The thundercloud was there, and defiance burned in her eyes.

"Nay," he said quietly. "I know sheep better than you. He's gey big already. When he's a bit bigger, mebbe he'll hurt someone."

She said, hotly: "If anybody lays a hand on Jinks, I'll kill them!"

By the look of her, she meant it. The easygoing Leece rubbed his chin. "Well, then, you must be responsible for owt that happens."

"Of course I'll be responsible. Jinks isn't savage. It's only high spirits. That child teased him."

"Oo, ay," said her father, and left it at that.

At least, he did not quite leave it at that. Not even his tolerant nature could accept the prospect of an adult pet ram about the place. With its size and strength and natural urges, it could be an ugly customer. So one weekend, when Marion was away, he had it doctored. She came back to find her pet turned to a wether, and the scene she created sent her father out of the house for a couple of hours to console himself at the local.

THERE, in the low room with its thick stone walls, reigned only one topic of talk. Everybody was discussing the problem of missing sheep. Young Branthwaite said his father had lost nine more. Joe Dugdale had lost five, Isaac Cowman seven, and so forth. In no individual case were the numbers large. That was what made the affair so curious. Surely, if sheep-stealers were at work, the losses would be more wholesale?

Isaac Cowman said: "I reckon policeman should be towld. Ay, 'tis his job."

The others agreed, and Isaac was deputed to get in touch with Tryson, the policeman at Iredale Green.

Tryson wasted no time. He called a meeting of everybody concerned, and that included Marion. She suggested the best scheme would be to fix up a rota of watching, everybody taking a share. It was a sensible idea. The potential watchers knew every inch of the fells and everything there is to know about the ways of fell sheep. They drew up a timetable of watchers, and made copies of it, so that all should know exactly the time and place of their duties.

Dick Branthwaite felt amused. Sheep-stealing was bringing in a deal of money, and he had no fear of detection. Considering he had reported losses among his father's flock, and was taking his share as a watcher, how could they possibly suspect him? Unlike Marion, he felt no inherent love of the fells, no urgent craving to get on working terms with the good earth. It was his secret belief that if he kept his eyes open for the main chance, something exciting and profitable was bound to come his way.

It was Ploward, the village butcher in Martdale, who had sown the seeds of opportunity. Meeting Dick at Broughton market one morning, he had hinted that there were plenty of hotels, transport cafés and the like, ready to pay top prices for mutton and ask no questions. All Dick had to do was to deliver the sheep by night to the fold on the fellside above Ploward's premises.

The actual stealing itself was ridiculously simple. With Fleet, his white-throated sheep-dog squatting at his side, he would take out the truck, stop it on some dark and silent stretch, and let down the big tail-board that served as a ramp. There were always a few sheep browsing or drowsing within the nearby radius. Fleet slid silently into the shadows, and in two or three minutes was back with a bunch of Herdwicks or Swaledales.

So the solemn planning of the village policeman and the committee of watchers tickled Dick Branthwaite. As he was one of them, and shared every detail of their programme, he knew exactly where and when it would be safe to operate.

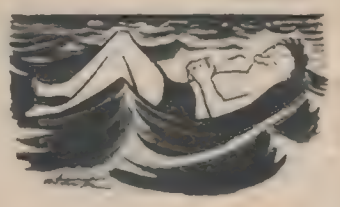
BY November, Jinks had grown into a broad-backed, powerful animal, the tyrant of the Fold End farmyard. To Marion he showed docility, but towards anybody else his attitude was always aggressive.

The dale postman was the central figure in the climax. Leaving his van in the road one day, he came walking across the yard with some letters. He didn't notice Jinks, lurking in a shadowy corner. The postman dropped one of the letters. As he stooped to pick it up, Jinks launched a swift, fierce butt. It took him behind the thighs and sent him flat on his face. There had been rain, and mud spattered him liberally.

Swearing, the postman scrambled to his feet. Jinks made no attempt to retreat, but stood there watching him with a threatening glint in those shiny eyes.

"You ——!" The infuriated postman aimed a kick. Jinks dodged it

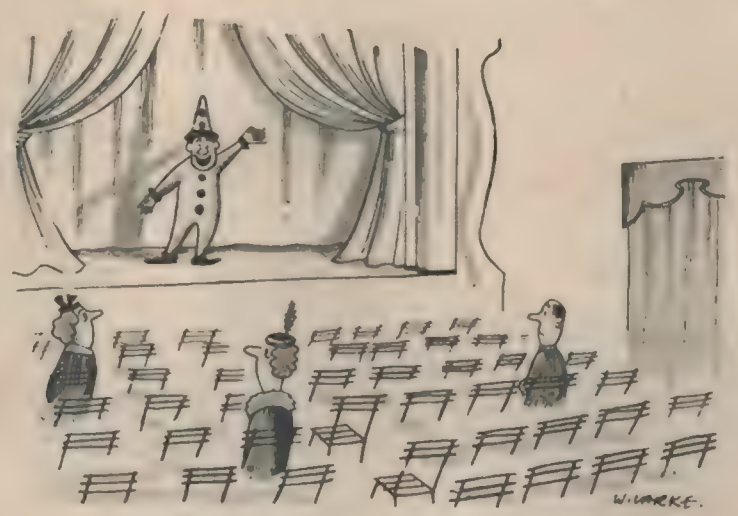
NOW YOU KNOW



YOU often read in reports of drowning that "the swimmer became exhausted." Generally the real cause is not exhaustion but *panic*.

When the inexperienced swimmer feels himself getting out of breath and control he begins to worry. Worry tenses his muscles. The tenser he gets, the harder he has to work, the more breathless he becomes. He panics and struggles wildly to "support" himself, forgetting that the water will support him—if he lets it.

All he need do is to turn on his back and float, relax and rest. When he's under control again he can move to safety.



"First, let's have a chorus from the ladies"

by veering to one side, and, in the same motion, thrust his head forward with a savage jab. It caught the postman in the pit of the stomach, and he staggered back with an exploding groan.

Leece had seen the incident from the old barn. He came running across, grabbed Jinks by the horns, swung a leg over his back, and shoved and paddled him into the pen at the side of the dipping-trough. Smooth words and a tot of brandy were needed before the postman was even semi-mollified.

Leece told Marion. She merely laughed.

"'Tis nay laughing matter," he said. "I've had more than enough o' Jinks. He's going."

She looked at him for a moment, and her face went quite white. "If Jinks goes, I go. I can easily get a job on another farm."

That shocked him. He said more mildly: "Marion, you'd nay do that."

"I would!"

Father and daughter faced each other, and he knew he was beaten.

In a moment, her face softened. "Don't look so worried," she said. "I'll see that he's kept out of the way when people are around."

It was all very well to say that, thought Leece. She was just going off for a fortnight, to stay with an aunt at Cockermouth. While she was away, he would have to keep Jinks penned up all the time, and the brute would blare the place down.

He made a private decision. After Marion had left for Cockermouth, he would cart Jinks off to the fell breast, over the opposite side of the dale. Thousands of sheep found grazing up above there, on Birker Moor. When Marion came back, he would simply say that Jinks seemed to have strayed off for a while. Likely she would make a scene, but. . . .

He closed his mind to the prospect of that, sought refuge in another problem that was more serious. Despite the efforts of P.C. Tryson and the watchers, the sheep-stealing was getting worse. Leece's own losses now amounted to a probable fifty-six. Tryson had insisted on the affair being made a county police matter. Police on bikes and motor-bikes and in cars had been patrolling some of the fell roads by night. They had questioned farmers and shepherds and dalesfolk generally. All to no avail.

* * *

At half past seven one evening a fortnight later, Dick Branthwaite left Birkholme in the truck. There was nothing furtive about his departure. He had told his father he was going to a dance at Broughton. Further, to kill two birds with one stone, he would take half a dozen sheep they had decided to sell at the next day's auction there. He would leave them with a Broughton friend who had agreed to take them with some of his own to the market in the morning.

The cleverness of the arrangement tickled his vanity. Should he be stopped and questioned before he started the illicit gather, he had a perfect answer. If, by some unexpected stroke of bad luck, he ran into a police patrol after he had made his haul, there would be a fair chance of bluffing them. He would tell the same story, bring two or three of his own sheep out of the back of the lorry and show them the flock mark. They might well be content with that and not bother to examine the rest.

With Fleet at his side, he drove down the dark dale road, swung left at the Birker Moor turning and began to climb the long, curving incline. Presently, he dimmed his headlights.

Near the top of the hill was a grassy stretch, a favourite spot for sheep. It ran in a rough oval, the bulk of it on the left of the road, and the remainder spreading between the right of the road and the edge of Black Ghyll, a ravine that dropped a hundred feet sheer into Birker Beck, hissing and muttering among the rocks below.

DICK drove the truck on to the grass, a hundred yards off the road, and stopped. As usual, he tied a rag of dark material around the whiteness of Fleet's throat. It was as well to take every precaution.

The dog rippled off, a shadow among shadows, and set to work. A few noises were inevitable—a cough, a pattering, the clinking of hoofs against rock. He stood by the lowered tailboard of the lorry, keeping his own sheep back, and marshalling those chivvied forward by the dog. They included some fine four-year-old ewes.

With thirty-eight in the lorry, he was satisfied. He raised the tailboard and shot the bolts. Passing around the side to the driving seat, he happened to glance towards the edge of Black Ghyll. A sheep was lying there among the herbage, close to the edge. From what he could see in the pallid gloom, there was plenty of flesh under that swelling fleece.

"Might as well have it," he told himself, and gave a low whistle. Fleet streaked off across the dark

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road and came in behind the sheep.

It made a grunting sound, and refused to budge. Fleet thrust his muzzle against the root of the fat tail, and still it remained there, unmoving. Fleet stood back, baffled, not knowing what to do next. The dog had dealt with many an obstinate sheep, but this was something outside his experience.

Dick strode across. "I'll teach you, you basket!" he whispered, and getting between the sheep and the edge of the ghyll, let fly with a lusty kick. "Now! Come on, will you."

Jinks, resentful and savage, lurched to his feet. A second kick thumped against his backside. He swivelled round, and with the full weight of his ninety pounds, flung himself forward in a vicious butt.

Dick stood no chance. Caught off his balance, he swayed backwards, grabbed at empty air, toppled over the edge. His wild scream ended abruptly.

"I hope you don't mind. I've been on the go all day"

NEXT morning, Leece, Marion and Harry Sim started off on a gathering to bring down the ewes for breeding. Harry Sim was working on his own. Today's target for Leece and Marion was Birker.

There was a sombre air of restraint about the two. Within five minutes of returning from Cockermouth the previous evening, Marion had erupted like a volcano. At breakfast, she had told her father stormily that until Jinks was found, she would keep on searching, even if it meant sleeping out on the fells.

The best thing, Leece thought wistfully to himself, would be to find the animal dead, or possessed of a sudden disaffection for Marion. Or, he thought sharply, with sudden inspiration, not there at all. Gone, stolen. With or without the sheep-stealers, that could be arranged.

Marion trudged on without a word. Leece got out his pipe and lit it, gazing after her. He was trying to follow the implications of this new line of thought. If Jinks had been stolen, then Marion's wrath would be directed away from him to the sheep-stealers. She wouldn't rest until she had discovered exactly what had happened to her beloved Jinks. She'd inspect every herd for miles around. She'd go to every butcher in the county. She'd harry the police till, most likely, they'd examine every leg of mutton in the land.

He began to follow his daughter. They were walking up to the oval of grassland higher up. There they would separate, taking a side each to gather in the sheep from the boundaries of his grazing rights.

Leece was grunting to himself with satisfaction. The idea of putting out Jinks seemed now to have been a piece of excellent strategy. Jinks was going to be the instrument of bringing peace to his household—and, perhaps, after an initial rumpus, to the county as well.

When next he looked up, nodding and grunting a little to himself, he saw that Marion had stopped. She looked back at him, then away again, not speaking. Leece drew level. Near the edge of Black Ghyll was a lorry. The barred van was full of sheep.

Marion said: "Do you know anything about this?"

"Nay," said Leece slowly. "'Tis gey queer. Got no right to be here. Where's the driver?"

"There isn't one," said Marion. She walked up to the engine and felt it. "It's stone cold."

Leece was looking at the sheep. He said slowly: "Look here, girl." He caught hold of a sheep and drew it nearer to the bars. It was one of his own herd.

There was a long silence. Marion and Leece looked at each other.

"It's Branthwaite's van," said Marion suddenly.

Leece's eyes were shocked. "I can't believe old Branthwaite had owt to do wi' it," he said at last. After a while, he said: "Driver would be young Dick, I suppose. Ay, that would be it."

They gazed around at the empty moor. From the direction of the ghyll came the distressed yelping of a dog. They hurried across to the dark, rocky edge. Below was a dog, squatting by something huddled among the beck-washed boulders.

Leece said: "I know the way down." He ran to the left for some distance, and let himself down a series of ledges to the bed of the beck. Marion watched him pick his way along and stoop over the huddled figure.

His startled face stared up at her. "'Tis Dick Branthwaite. He's dead."

Marion said nothing.

Leece climbed back up and stood by her, looking down. "Best get police," he said at last. "Nowt we can do now."

"Dick Branthwaite couldn't have fallen down there," Marion said very slowly. "He knows the country like the back of his hand."

"We don't know," said Leece. "Mebbe he was drunk."

"Then what about the lorry with our sheep? I think he was pushed. He was pushed either by whoever was with him in this business, or else. . . ."

Leece looked at her. "Or else what?"

But there was no need for her to answer. At that moment, there was a scrabbling sound close by, followed by a throaty blare, and over a hillock strolled a broad-backed sheep.

Leece gave a grim smile. It seemed that Jinks had cleared up the sheep-stealing without his mistress's help, in his own characteristic way.

And in a moment of sombre insight, Leece realized something else. He'd better resign himself to it right now—after all, what could he do against the wishes of a girl like Marion? Jinks, he felt sure, would be one of the family for a long time to come.

THE END

SOMETHING TO HOLD TO

Continued from page 15

right, Matthew." And the old man suddenly chuckled. "You're a right good audience, anyways, boy."

* * *

At the end of two months, Gregory was as brown as an Indian and he knew a great many things, such as how to make a fire with sticks, how to trap musk-rats so that the animals drowned instantly and did not suffer, how to cast and line fish, how to make fish-traps, and also that the dark was safer than the day.

"Must say I like night fishing," Matthew said. "Specially night spearing. We'll do it some time."

The first touch of frost was on the 'Glades on the day they started, and the sky was so blue it made the drying reeds as pale as raw silk. They threaded the hundred-forked waterways near the sea as the sky turned all clear wine with cold sunset.

Matthew lit the gasoline lantern in the bow. "Now just for pretending, we're going to pretend we haven't any stores," he said. "Matter of fact, I didn't bring any but coffee and sugar. To eat, we got to catch—or we go hungry. . . ." He smiled at Gregory. "For the next days, we see how we make out on survival—as if shops hadn't been invented! Now, for a start, when it's catch or go hungry, you make sure. . . . Many people say those needle-fish aren't edible, but I like 'em. Also, they aren't timid. You can get near 'em when you have nothing but a spear. Only thing to watch is, you must turn your grain parallel with the fish or the fish just slips between the tines."

The drifting boat and the eddying fish were closing with each other. Matthew stood above the light that was shaded from his eyes—and suddenly the grain flew downwards, was checked, and came back with the long and wriggling fish.

"Chop his head off!" Matthew said. "Don't know how much fish feel, but always make sure you don't let anything suffer for nothing."

Twenty yards beyond the bridge, they caught up with the needle-fish again. Matthew handed Gregory the grain. The boat swung in the green crystal of the channel that was now at slack water, and the needle-fish in the light of the gasoline lantern were pale blue with a suggestion of transparency on the green water. Gregory's grain leapt down and cut the water with a sharp whisper, but always the needle-fish at which he had struck was rippling safely a yard away. Then, at the tenth try, he brought up a fish.

"Now we'll work out over the flats," Matthew said.

They poled along the edge of the turtle-grass flats that were laced by blue-green channels, and in a grassy dip, a great crawfish showed golden against the darker green-gold of the weeds. "Too big to be tender unless you're real pressed," Matthew said. "Now there's a beauty over yonder, but deep! I'll hold the boat while you get him."

The boat wanted to swing anywhere but over the crawfish.

"A bit to port! . . . Forward!" Gregory whispered. Matthew jockeyed the boat. "Hold it!" Gregory said, and waited as the bow swung slowly above the craw. As the crawfish was directly below, he reached high on the nine-foot handle of the grain and drove the grain downward through the pulling water, and as the grain buried itself there was the exciting, electric thrill of life on it.

"Harder!" Matthew said. "Make sure, then bring him up fast!"

Gregory pressed with all his strength and then pulled up the jerking, thrashing grain, and a fine crawfish was in the boat.

"Good graining!" Matthew said.

THEY got three more good craws, then moved out across an area where the bottom was uneven and golden brown with seaweeds.

"Now we have enough for eating," Matthew said, "but there's lots more in the sea a man can eat if he has to." . . . He gripped Matthew's arm suddenly. "Look, boy—look over yonder." The light picked out the nine-foot bulk of a drowsing shark. "You'd need a mighty heavy spear for him, and we won't hurt him as we don't need him, but turn the grain around and we'll see if we can sneak up and give him a poke!"

Gregory raised the grain, barb up, as Matthew edged the boat in. The shark slept on. "Never get too close to anything big," Matthew said softly. "Can get your boat stove if you do. . . . Now!"

Gregory clenched the grain handle and drove sideways. The shark leapt as the handle bounced from the tough hide—and this was the most thrilling contact yet! And the boat rolled and plunged from the shark's side lunge. Then the vivid shadows were empty.

They threaded green channels through mangroves, and huge groupers sulked against the laced roots, and little fish and big fish raced through the light. Then they were far out over pale green sand-bottoms, and on the bottom was a great kite-shape, huge as a barn door. Gregory looked at it, awed. "That's a manta," Matthew said. "We call 'em 'rays. Would have to have something mighty heavy for him. And a rope. Now do you want to see a show? Well, untie the anchor stone."

When the stone was free, they backed off respectfully. Matthew took the stone and raised it behind his head, hurling it high so that it crashed through the water above the sleeping 'ray. Instantly, the sea boiled, and, huge and unbelievable, the manta shot from the sea, hanging for an instant in its wavering enormity against the ancient night. And as the thing fell back into the sea, the report was that of a cannon, and foam leapt thirty feet upwards.

They skirted the edges of deep pools where great morays wound, leopard-marked and fringed. Then they had reached a little cove where, between wind-stunted green bushes, driftwood was stranded on bone-pale sand. The tent, when they had raised it, was lovely with loneliness and the orange of lantern light shining through the walls, and above it, the dark sky and the stars.

"Now we have no pots or pans except for the coffee," Matthew said. "So we roast the craws in the hot

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coals with seaweed round them. The fish we pack in wet sand and bake in the ashes. While they're cooking, we go get us some palm cabbage for our salad!"

He selected a palm about five feet high and cut out the ball-like heart of the head. "Now you shred that up while I get a coconut. When we grate the coconut meat, we'll squeeze it in a clean clam shell and have us the finest salad dressing there is: coconut cream."

They ate while the fire flapped and the ancient dark drew round them and the stars blazed above the black sea. "Fine oysters on the mangrove roots hereabouts," Matthew said. "Tomorrow we have us an oyster roast. . . . Guess you know now a man need never starve while there's the sea."

"This was the best time we ever had, Matthew!" Gregory said. "This was the best day I ever had!"

"Tomorrow will be better," Matthew promised. "We've a might of things to do tomorrow. . . ."

AND every day was better. On the third night, they ate supper on a little island far up the coast. Then the thunderbolt struck. Matthew said: "Son, I reckon it's time we had a real talk. If you don't tell me, well, I'll just have to find out, as it were. . . . And believe me, I don't want to! But since I got to, I want it from you." He paused. "I mean, we're running on into Fort Myers tonight, and if there's anything you'd like to say to me, now's the time."

Gregory began to tremble violently. He could not speak for a while, and then he said, very softly: "I lied to you, Matthew." It felt as if the world was coming to an end.

"That's no disgrace . . . just so long as we face up to the truth when we're able."

"You won't be mad, Matthew?"

"Not with you I won't."

When Matthew heard the story, he sat smoking.

"You aren't mad, Matthew? I can stay, Matthew?" Gregory asked, and little beads of sweat stood on his forehead.

Matthew put out his hand and patted Gregory's shoulder. "Never less mad with you! But, worse luck for me, you can't stay."

Gregory threw himself at him and clung to his booted leg. "Please, Matthew, please! If you send me away, I don't have anyone, now there isn't Toni!" It was as if he was again in the air among the stars

"*Why* did the stork bring him? Why wasn't he born in a maternity home like any other kid?"

and the night, and there was nothing to hold on to.

"That isn't so," Matthew said slowly. "Life is hard, but there's few of us have nothing to hold on to. . . . Take you, you're only a little boy, but you're rich in all sorts of things. For instance, now, Toni could easily have got out of the plane if he hadn't made sure for you, couldn't he? When things get tight and you're lonely, you can say: 'Toni was young and he loved life, but he was my friend and he gave up his life for me.' For what I'm worth, you can say: 'Matthew thought sky-high of me! He'd have given his right arm to keep me!' When things don't seem worthwhile, you can think: Matthew expected a lot of me! He said to himself: 'Maybe saving that boy was the reason for all the years I've lived like an old hobo in the swamps!' . . ."

He stood up and extended his hand to lift Gregory. "What people do for you and what people expect of you both make a debt honest men have to pay." They began to carry the things to the boat. "And, speaking of debts, while I know you didn't think of it," Matthew said, "you haven't done so well, yet, paying Toni—come to think of it. . . . There's that poor girl hoping and despairing and to be comforted by knowing he died a brave man—like you must tell her! And, if your folks will let you—and I think they will when you ask them—you must see that the house for Toni's people gets built and that the girl never wants. . . . Why, just paying your debts will keep you busy Lord knows how long!"

They put the last things in the boat and Matthew started the engine and the boat slid through the polished dark. Gregory bent his face against his arms.

"Hold the tiller!" Matthew commanded. Gregory held it, but he could not look up. Matthew reached into the piled bag and took out a can and from it took something into his hand. "When I found him, I took the ring from his finger and the pull from the 'chute harness. Now it seems to me you should have the 'chute-pull, and you should send the ring from his finger to the poor young girl. She'd maybe like that. As for you, if this isn't something for you to hold on to, you're not the man I think you are."

Gregory took the things without raising his head, and the little boat flew on through the darkness, while all along the coast the beacons winked. The 'chute-pull and the ring grew warm in his hand, and by degrees they did seem something to hold on to.

"I wouldn't want to disappoint you and Toni, Matthew," he said, in a muffled voice. "I didn't think, Matthew!" He grasped at a hope that was suddenly touched with new fear. "Matthew, can I come here for my holidays? Matthew, you'll always be here?"

MATTHEW considered as carefully as Toni had always considered his questions. "It's for your people to say if you can come—and I think after what they have been through, you're going to find them plenty more understanding. . . . As for being here, well, when you come, we'll have such times as we haven't seen yet!"

Gregory sat up. In his hand, the 'chute-pull was warm and hard, and as the beacons lit the polished blackness of the night, he saw a sudden glorious vista of holidays with Matthew. Then, as he breathed hard and the cold air stung his nose, he felt confidence in the future.

"Matthew," he said. "I don't mind so much—not being able to stay here, I mean. The holidays will be great, Matthew, won't they?"

The old man caught the tone, and the significance of it. He thought he'd done a pretty good job.

"They sure will, son," he said. "They sure will." THE END

AMAZING AFRICA

Continued from page 8

lounge, having her great ears tickled by rather nervous guests. After this introduction she became almost a mascot at the hotel.

Iola was the perfect example of training by kindness. While it would have been unwise to trust her near a flock of goats, she did play happily with the Taberers' puppy. Every time her master came back from his long trips, Iola went wild with delight, rubbing herself against the fence of her boma and purring to him, until he went in to her and they rolled on the earth together in a mock fight that looked terrifying.

Yet Iola was once almost the cause of her master's death—though it was hardly her fault. Coming home one night as darkness was falling, Taberer found Iola sitting on an anthill, a favourite perch of hers. He got out of the truck with his usual greeting: "Where's my lovely girl?" expecting her to come bounding up to him as she always did.

Instead, the lioness flattened herself on the anthill, her teeth showing, her mouth opened in a defiant snarl. Taberer admits to being disconcerted. But he walked quietly towards her, talking in a low, friendly voice, amazed that all her confidence in him was gone. Then, when he was almost at the anthill where the great beast crouched, tail switching in hatred, he noticed . . . that she was not Iola!

"I backed out a few steps," he says, "then I frankly turned and bolted. At that moment, so did she—in the opposite direction."

Now tragedy has come to Iola herself. Her fame had become so great that, a few weeks ago, she was sent on the journey to England to appear in a film. On the way she escaped—and was shot by a man who did not know she was tame.

Taberer has a gift with animals. Charged by a rhino, he has been seen to throw his battered hat at the beast, shouting: "Go home, you silly old fool!"—and the trick seems to work. "You have to know when a rhino's charging out of sheer cussedness and curiosity, and when he really means business," he explains. "They're seldom really dangerous, but they are idiots. The chap who is dangerous is the elephant."

In the evenings, the green truck will be stopped by the roadside, and the Taberers will sit like new tourists, watching elephants. Incidentally, the Tsavo National Park is one of the few places in the world where you can really see pink elephants. They get that colour from rolling in red mud.

"It shakes some people to the roots," says Taberer. "To be charged by a rhino is amusing if you're in a good car, but to be charged by a bright pink one is another thing altogether!"

NEXT WEEK: Alastair Scobie tells the story of Dolly, Africa's Betty Grable

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JOHN BULL, 2/6/51

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Add 2, 3 or 4 Words to any of these "EXAMPLES"

To make a *Bullet*, add simply TWO, THREE or FOUR words of apt and original comment to any of the *Examples* below. To use an incomplete *Example*, first complete it with any one word in place of dotted line—then make your *Bullet* as usual.

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Farmer John
As We Get Older
Austerity's Millstone
Stockpiling
Life In The Country
Civil Defence
With A Song In His Heart
Toil And Trouble
Magnificent
She Adores
Too Much Fuss
On Tour
Nobody Spoke, But
The Bait
Up To No Good
The Police Arrived And
Dodging Grandpa
Like A Swarm Of Bees
Festival In Our Village

Incomplete "Examples" —see instructions

The Usual .....
.....For Ever
As Long As It's.....
Didn't Frighten.....
Every Inch A.....
If.....Played Cricket

NOTE.—You may enclose *Bullets* and Xword entries in same envelope covered by single P.O. for combined entry-fee. Mark envelope "Combined," top left-hand corner.

POST ENTRY

"Bullets" 1,786 (or Xword 738), "John Bull," Long Acre, London, W.C.2 (Comp.)

NEXT WEEK—MORE RIVIERA and SEASIDE HOLIDAYS

RULES 1. First Prize for best *Bullet* received. Others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
3. As entry-fee, enclose P.O. or stamps as indicated on coupon. Fee submitted will be taken to cover *Bullets* in coupon order—any sent in excess will be disqualified. Plain-paper entries are allowed. If using P.O. make payable to JOHN BULL, cross /& Co./, write name and address on back. Coupons must not be mutilated. Forces half-rate for *Bullets* and Crosswords for entry-fees not exceeding 2s. if coupons personally completed and Service rank indicated.
4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in *Bulletin* and *Gazette*, dated June 30 and in JOHN BULL dated July 7, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding. Odhams' employees (and families) ineligible.

"Bullets" Winners 1,781

FIRST PRIZE, £500 plus Swiss Holiday for Two: Mrs. N. Lincoln, 18 Cripley Road, Oxford: A GENTLE REMINDER OF "GRACIOUS AGE"—QUEEN-MOTHER.

£50 plus Seaside Holiday for Two: Miss D. H. Ralphs, 4 Forest View Avenue, Leyton, E.10: IN WESTMINSTER'S WORKSHOP—*Age-old* "MACHINERY"—WORLD'S "MODEL"!

£25 plus Seaside Holiday for Two: Nurse S. McGinley, Clare Hall Hospital, South Mimms: A REAL GOOD—DO. DOING GOOD—FESTIVAL.

£10 plus Seaside Holiday for Two: J. M. Thorpe, 81 Hopedale Road, Frecheville, Sheffield: NOT AT ALL DANGEROUS—UNTIL MAN "*Tamed*" ATOM.

OTHER AWARDS: £9: Mrs. M. Dickerson, 66 Dickens Road, East Ham, E.6: DAY AT THE FESTIVAL—TURNED GROWLER INTO "BARKER"! £8: Mrs. E. Wagstaff, "Oakcliffe," N. Sea Lane, Humberston, Cleethorpes: FORTUNE SMILED AND—GAVE ME A "JOKER." £7: F. R. Chandler, c/o 34 Fitzroy Street, Ipswich: VICTIM OF THE ROADHOG—AWARDED COMPENSATION—BOUGHT CAR! £6: Mrs. J. E. Terry, 121 Cardigan Road, Leeds: DAY AT THE FESTIVAL—INTERESTING, INSTRUCTIVE, INSPIRING—INSUFFICIENT! £5: P. H. Lisk, 19 Palmersfield Road, Banstead: "DON'T WORRY, ME!"—*Biggest* CIVIL DEFENCE WORRY. £5: C. Tring, "Collingwood," The Groves, Snodland, Kent: NOT AT ALL NECESSARY—"HENRY" EMBROIDERED ON *Apron*!

10 Prizes of £4. 50 of £1 and 2,000 "Good Shots" have also been posted.

CASH AND HOLIDAYS FOR XWORDS!

THIS WAY TO WIN

FIRST complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues below. Then, if you wish to enter *one* extra Answer to any *one, two or three* Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

Across Clues — **Xword 738**

1. Fox with hounds hot on his heels very often does this to elude them
2. Average person is interested if he gets this into published diary of some well-known person
4. Exactly what desperate refugee looks for
6. Cheerful news can provide stimulating one
8. Some public speakers aren't anything like so effective without this of notes
11. Many little girls like playing with these
12. Many a housewife would consider this a real blessing in her larder
13. This is often just what the doctor orders

Down Clues

1. Running one can leave a person pretty well exhausted
3. Struggling artist, undertaking work he considers beneath him, may lower his
5. Men accustomed to living in these usually appreciate a good home
7. Will give value to stock
8. Its main purpose is protective
9. As a rule, we don't expect to see bloom on
10. A policeman sometimes needs this if he's to do his job

£100 1st Prize plus

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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to *one* Clue will represent *two* full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.) Square with one extra Answer to *two* Clues will represent *four* full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.) and Square with one extra Answer to *three* Clues will represent *eight* full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink not pencil.

Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword Gazette* dated June 23.

Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature indicates agreement to Rules.

1F		I	L	S	■	2	E	E	3P
	■	4H	O	L		■	L	A	R
A	5H	■	K	A	■	S	A	R	I
6T	O	■	I	C	■	P	N	■	■
■	■	■	■	K	7B	E	■	B	E
8H	E	■	P	■	O	R	9G	Y	■
O	L	■	M	I	N	E	R	■	10
O	S	A	■	■	■	■	A	I	R
■	■	11T	O	■	S	■	■	■	I
■	12	A	T	738	■	13	E	S	T

CLUE	EXTRA ANSWER	Total Fee
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Puzzle and Form strictly copyright **738** Closing Postmark MON., JUNE 11

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MAGIC UNCLE OF THE SEASIDE

Continued from page 9

open air, the stage under cover. Rain or shine, there is always an audience. One afternoon it was pelting down so furiously that Collins felt obliged to invite the ninety-odd intrepid young spectators on to the stage. "With ninety children crowded right on top of me, I really had to put on a good act to fool them," he says.

"To be a good children's entertainer you have to be a bit of a psychologist as well," Collins claims. "Children are difficult to get on with, and you can't be strict with them like a schoolmaster, because they are on holiday. They are all sizes and they come from all kinds of homes. And they develop a terrific loyalty."

He has a card trick that was once almost defeated by a child's loyalty. Children in the first row of the audience are invited to pick four cards, show them to those sitting behind but hide them from him. From a pack in his hand, Collins picks three of the cards correctly, but on the fourth choice he deliberately makes a mistake; subsequently the right card rises from his coat collar or some other unexpected place.

Talent Contests Barred

Once, when he made his "mistake" and asked the stock question: "Is that right?" the child holding the card blushed, hid it and answered, "Yes." The rest of the audience screamed with derision, but Collins's loyal accomplice insisted that he had picked the right one. "That trick was almost ruined, and it was hard not to offend the child who was trying to protect me because he thought I had failed," said Collins.

In line with the psychological aspects of the job, the competitions which Jean arranges are designed so that any child can win. Talent contests make for rivalry among the children and jealousy among parents, the Collinses feel.

Jean and Dennis emphasize, however, that they are not just entertainers. They are universal uncle and aunt to all the children who visit the resort. In the mornings they organize games on the beach. Jean takes charge of the small children and Dennis takes the older ones. The games session lasts for an hour, leaving parents free to do as they wish.

And it does not stop there. It takes Jean twice the normal time to do her shopping in Hunstanton because she is always trailed by an entourage of little girls. Dennis has to leave for his show a full hour before the opening curtain because he is stopped so often by admiring youth.

"It's a full-time job, and if we don't stop to chat with the children in our off-hours, the parents are hurt," Dennis says. "You don't realize how hectic a kiddy's life is till you start leading it all over again as a grown-up." THE END

WRITE TO JOHN BULL ABOUT IT

READERS with personal problems can obtain the help of John Bull's team of experts. Inquiries (other than medical) should be addressed to the John Bull Free Advice Service, 189 High Holborn, London, W.C.1. Enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for reply.

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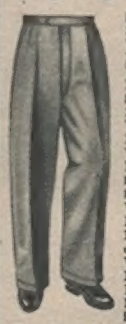

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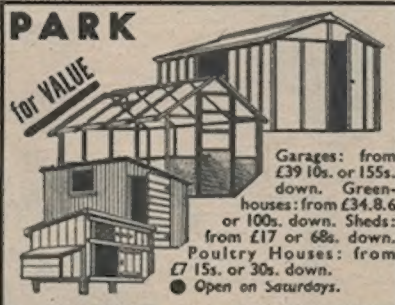

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